MENTAL HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

A PLUG AND PLAY ACTIVITY FOR YOUTH

FACILITATOR GUIDE

July 2023

FYSB Family & Youth Services Bureau

CONTENTS

Overview

This module will provide youth with tools to improve their well-being and link them to resources for assistance with mental health needs. Youth will be introduced to self-care and well-being practices and will develop a self-care plan, which may improve quality of life and relationships and reduce risk-taking behaviors (Schwartz et al., 2011). Youth will also learn of the importance of having open communication with trusted adults about mental health.

KEY TOPICS

Health, well-being, self-care

AUDIENCE

Youth
(middle- and high school-aged)

LENGTH

70 minutes

GOALS

- Youth will learn coping/self-care practices and techniques.
- Youth will learn resources to improve well-being.
- Youth will learn when and how to facilitate conversations with a trusted adult.

KEY MESSAGES FOR YOUTH

- Youth experience a wide range of emotions as a normal part of their adolescent development.
- Mental well-being affects daily functioning and can help prevent risk-taking behaviors.
- Resources exist to improve mental health/well-being.
- I can learn and implement coping/self-care practices and skills.

Before You Start

To get ready for this classroom activity, read this facilitator guide to familiarize yourself with each section and then review the checklist below and gather all the materials and technology you will need. Some activities will require advance preparation.

Resource	How to Prepare	Where You Will Use this Resource
Laptop or tablet device		Entire lesson
Projector or shared screen using videoconferencing platform (e.g., Zoom, Google Meet, Microsoft Teams, Blackboard)		Entire lesson
Students' school or personal laptops, tablets, or mobile phones (optional)		Entire lesson
Chalkboard or whiteboard, flip chart, or means to display results of brainstorming activity (e.g., shared Google Doc, Google Slides, Zoom's whiteboard feature)		Section 1
Optional brainstorming method: Poll Everywhere free basic account	Poll Everywhere can be used to engage students in brainstorming activities. Poll Everywhere shows the results in real time, which increases student engagement. Before the class discussion, sign up for a free Poll Everywhere account, which will allow you to create a question and have participants type in responses in real time via the web or SMS text messages. If you choose to use Poll Everywhere for brainstorming, read the instructions to learn how to set up a poll first. Choose the poll type called "open-ended question."	Section 1

Resource	How to Prepare	Where You Will Use this Resource
Well-Being Scavenger Hunt		Section 2
Well-Being Scavenger Hunt (facilitator version)		Section 2
Self-Care Plan (blank template)		Section 3
Self-Care Plan Examples		Section 3
Well-Being and Self-Care Resources		Section 3

SECTION 1
What is Well-Being? (30 minutes)

OBJECTIVES

- Youth will learn components of well-being and how to recognize varied emotions.
- Youth will learn how well-being can lead to increased risk-taking behaviors.
- Youth will learn ways to overcome stigma associated with counseling/treatment.
- Youth will learn when and how to facilitate conversations with a trusted adult.

KEY WORDS AND PHRASES

Mental health, well-being, risk-taking, stigma, trusted adult, therapist, counselor

MATERIALS

N/A

TECHNOLOGY/TOOLS

- Laptop or tablet device
- Projector or shared screen using videoconferencing platform such as Zoom, Google Meet, Microsoft Teams, or Blackboard
- Students' school or personal laptops, tablets, or mobile phones (optional)
- Chalkboard or whiteboard, flip chart, or means to display results of brainstorming activity (e.g., shared Google Doc, Google Slides, Zoom's whiteboard feature)
- Poll Everywhere free account (optional)

PART 1 | Key Components of Well-Being (10 minutes)

Brainstorming and Class Discussion

Guide students in identifying components of well-being.

SAY: Today we'll be talking about "well-being." What words, phrases, or behaviors come to mind when you hear the word, "well-being?" Think about all the physical, social, emotional, and financial things that may be associated with good well-being.

Have students brainstorm for **2 minutes** about the components of well-being. Encourage students to say whatever comes to mind to prompt as many ideas as possible. Record students' ideas on a whiteboard, flip chart, or virtual whiteboard or use Poll Everywhere to gather ideas. Repeat ideas as needed for clarification. If using a virtual whiteboard, use the annotate feature to allow students to write their ideas. Record exact words and phrases provided and allow repetition; mark duplicates with a checkmark or star to note ideas generated by multiple participants.

FACILITATOR TIP

Use Poll Everywhere as an optional brainstorming method to ask students to brainstorm words, phrases, or behaviors that come to mind when they think about what well-being means to them.

See Before You Start on Page 2 for instructions.

If the session is conducted in person, you might also use a brainstorming game to facilitate the discussion. For example, you can time this activity so students must come up with as many ideas as possible within a certain time frame. You might also incorporate a soft object that students can toss to each other, sharing an idea as the object is passed to them.

PART 1 | Key Components of Well-Being

SAY: Let's summarize all the things you thought of that have to do with well-being.

Repeat each word or phrase generated by the students.

FACILITATOR TIP

If students haven't suggested the following phrases, bring them up and add them to the list generated by the class:

- Getting enough sleep
- Enjoying activities
- Good decision-making
- Making time to relax
- Positive relationships
- Healthy boundaries and communication
- Physical activities (sports, walking, working out)
- Support from someone you can talk to (trusted adult)
- Smart spending habits

SAY: Good well-being is when you feel good about and care for yourself, have positive moods and emotions, and practice good decision-making.

ASK: What words, phrases, or behaviors come to mind when you think about a lack of well-being or poor well-being?

Have students brainstorm for **2 minutes** about the components of poor well-being.

SAY: Let's summarize all the things you thought of that have to do with poor well-being.

Repeat each word or phrase generated by the students.

PART 1 | Key Components of Well-Being

FACILITATOR TIP

If students haven't suggested the following phrases, bring them up and add them to the list generated by the class:

- Loss of interest in activities you love
- Anxiety
- Irritability
- Loss of joy
- Frequent crying
- Changes in eating habits
- Changes in sleeping habits
- Low energy
- Withdrawal from friends and family
- Unhealthy boundaries and communication
- Risk-taking behaviors

SAY: Poor well-being is when our moods and emotions are not what we want them to be. When we find it difficult to manage how we think, feel, and respond to stress, it can lead to risk-taking behaviors.

PART 2 | Well-Being and Risk-Taking Behaviors (10 minutes)

Brainstorming and Class Discussion

Guide students in identifying risk-taking behaviors.

? ASK: What activities do you consider as risk-taking behaviors? Think about all kinds of behaviors with the potential to be hurtful, harmful, or dangerous.

Have students brainstorm for **2 minutes** about examples of risk-taking behaviors. Encourage students to say whatever comes to mind to prompt as many ideas as possible. Record students' ideas on a whiteboard, flip chart, or virtual whiteboard or use Poll Everywhere to gather ideas. Repeat ideas as needed for clarification. If using a virtual whiteboard, use the annotate feature to allow students to write their ideas. Record exact words and phrases provided and allow repetition; mark duplicates with a checkmark or star to note ideas generated by multiple participants.

> **FACILITATOR TIP**
>
> Use Poll Everywhere as an optional brainstorming method to ask students to brainstorm the words, phrases, or behaviors that come to mind when they consider examples of risk-taking behaviors.
>
> If the session is conducted in person, you might also use a brainstorming game to facilitate the discussion. For example, you can time this activity so students must come up with as many ideas as possible within a certain time frame. You might also incorporate a soft object that students can toss to each other, sharing an idea as the object is passed to them.

❞ SAY: Let's summarize all the things you consider being risk-taking behaviors.

Repeat each word or phrase generated by the students.

PART 2 | Well-Being and Risk-Taking Behaviors

> **FACILITATOR TIP**
>
> If students haven't suggested the following phrases, bring them up and add them to the list generated by the class:
>
> - Breaking the law
> - Alcohol and substance use
> - Skipping school
> - Driving dangerously (including driving under the influence and street racing)
> - Fighting/bullying
> - Having risky sex (e.g., unprotected sex)
> - Sexting

ASK: What are some ways that poor well-being could be connected to risk-taking behaviors?

Have students brainstorm for **2 minutes** about the relationship between poor well-being and risk-taking behaviors.

SAY: Let's summarize your ideas.

Repeat each word or phrase generated by the students.

> **FACILITATOR TIP**
>
> If students haven't suggested the following phrases, bring them up and add them to the list generated by the class:
>
> - Social influences (peer pressure, bullying)
> - Depression
> - Anxiety
> - Negative self-perception or body image
> - Negative thoughts or feelings about themselves
> - Lack of social support
> - Financial problems/poverty
> - Stress
> - Family communication challenges
> - Substance use can contribute to additional risk-taking behaviors (such as driving under the influence)
> - Lack of self-determination (the belief that your own actions, not external forces, determine what happens to you)

PART 3 | Overcoming Stigma and Having Conversations with a Trusted Adult (10 minutes)

Brainstorming and Class Discussion

1. **Guide students in identifying and having conversations with a trusted adult and overcoming mental health stigma.**

SAY: It's important to rely on your parents or guardians when you are concerned about something or experiencing mental health problems. Sometimes parents or guardians might not be available when you need help. In these cases, other trusted adults can also provide support. A trusted adult is a person who makes you feel safe through their words or actions and someone with whom you would feel comfortable having a sensitive conversation. Let's identify some trusted adults in your community who you could reach out to for help.

ASK: When your moods and emotions are not what you want them to be, who can you talk with to get help?

Have students brainstorm for **2 minutes** about who they can contact for help with moods and emotions and to prevent risk-taking behaviors.

SAY: Let's summarize all the people you named.

Repeat each word or phrase generated by the students.

> **FACILITATOR TIP**
>
> If students haven't suggested the following types of trusted adults, bring them up and add them to the list generated by the class:
>
> - Parent or guardian
> - Grandparent
> - Other relative
> - Teacher
> - Coach
> - Trusted family friend
> - Therapist
> - School counselor
> - School nurse
> - Faith leader
> - Youth group leader

SAY: Now think of the trusted adults in your life. Let's brainstorm for **2 minutes** about what conversations you might have with them about various aspects of well-being.

Have students brainstorm for **2 minutes** about topics they thought of that can be discussed with a trusted adult.

SAY: Okay, now let's summarize all the topics you thought of that can be discussed with a trusted adult.

Repeat each word or phrase generated by the students.

FACILITATOR TIP

If students haven't suggested the following phrases, bring them up and add them to the list generated by the class:

- Relationship/friendship advice
- How to manage stress
- How to manage fears or anxiety
- Concerns about mental illness
- Advice about school
- Questions about faith or religion
- Advice about difficult situations, like bullying
- Concerns about current events or things happening in the world
- Concerns about safety
- Concerns about an eating disorder

SAY: Sometimes talking with a trusted adult is not enough to improve your sense of well-being, and you may need to speak with a school counselor or therapist.

ASK: Why might someone be afraid to speak with a school counselor or therapist?

Have students brainstorm for **2 minutes** about why youth might be afraid to speak with a school counselor or therapist.

SAY: Let's summarize why youth might be afraid to speak with a school counselor or therapist.

Repeat each word or phrase generated by the students.

FACILITATOR TIP

If students haven't suggested the following phrases, bring them up and add them to the list generated by the class:

- Fear of what others (parents, friends, family) will think
- Fear of being teased or bullied
- Thinking you won't be taken seriously
- Feeling shame for asking for help
- Fear of discrimination (being treated differently or labeled as "crazy," violent, dangerous)
- Thinking that talking with a counselor or therapist won't help
- Cultural or religious norms
- Mistrust of health systems
- Fear of medication

SAY: These are real concerns that may keep youth from speaking to a therapist or counselor, but we've seen and discussed what can happen if you don't, like poor well-being and risk-taking behavior.

ASK: What might you say to a friend who is afraid to speak to a school counselor or therapist?

Have students brainstorm for **2 minutes** about what they would say to friend who is afraid to speak with a school counselor or therapist.

SAY: Let's summarize what you would say to a friend who is afraid to speak with a school counselor or therapist.

Repeat each word or phrase generated by the students.

FACILITATOR TIP

If students haven't suggested the following phrases, bring them up and add them to the list generated by the class:

- Everyone needs someone to talk to.
- I support your decision to speak with a counselor or therapist.
- I have spoken with a counselor/therapist before, and it was helpful.
- I know someone who spoke with a counselor/therapist, and it was helpful.
- Share what was learned from this module.
- It's important not to be alone with your feelings.
- We should be able to talk openly about mental health.
- Mental health is no different from physical health. They are both important.
- We can't let others dictate how we feel about ourselves.
- We all struggle at some point in our lives.

SECTION 2
Well-Being Scavenger Hunt
(20 minutes)

OBJECTIVES

- Youth will explore online services and resources to address well-being and mental health.
- Youth will be able to identify resources to help improve their well-being.

KEY WORDS AND PHRASES

Well-being

MATERIAL

- **Well-Being Scavenger Hunt**
- **Well-Being Scavenger Hunt** (facilitator version)

TECHNOLOGY/TOOLS

- Laptop or tablet device
- Students' school or personal laptops, tablets, or mobile phones (optional)

SAY: Now that we've discussed the various things that contribute to your well-being, you will complete a scavenger hunt to learn more about well-being among people your age and about resources to improve well-being. I'll pass out a handout for the **Well-Being Scavenger Hunt**. You'll work in teams to see how quickly you can fill in the blanks!

Assign students to small groups to work together on the scavenger hunt. If you're holding the class virtually, you'll likely need an adult facilitator for each breakout group. If you do not have additional facilitators, you can do this exercise with the whole class together.

Consider giving a prize to the team who completes the scavenger hunt the quickest (with accurate answers).

ASK: What surprised you about what you learned?

SECTION 3
Making a Self-Care Plan
(20 minutes)

OBJECTIVES

- Youth will identify their well-being needs, including social, emotional, physical, and intellectual/creative needs.
- Youth will develop their own self-care plans.

KEY WORDS AND PHRASES

Social, mental, emotional, physical, intellectual, creative

MATERIALS

- **Self-Care Plan** (blank template)
- **Self-Care Plan Examples**
- **Well-Being and Self-Care Resources**

TECHNOLOGY/TOOLS

- Laptop or tablet device

1. Introduce the activity.

? ASK: Have any of you ever heard of a "self-care plan" or created one before? What is the benefit of a self-care plan?

> **FACILITATOR TIP**
>
> Students may share that a self-care plan helps them manage their stress, prevent burnout, stay organized, meet certain needs, or prioritize their well-being. Feel free to mention these benefits if students do not.

SAY: Today we will be creating our own self-care plans. I'm going to hand out a blank Self-Care Plan you can use to create your own plan. We will be thinking of self-care ideas in four different areas: physical, emotional, social, and intellectual or creative. I'm also going to hand out a document with ideas you can use for your own plan, or you can think of completely different ones.

Hand out **Self-Care Plan** (blank template) and **Self-Care Plan Examples**.

? ASK: Are there any volunteers who would like to share an area in which they most need self-care?

? ASK: Are there any volunteers who would like to share the areas where they are already doing well? What kinds of things are you already doing to cultivate wellness in these areas?

2. Have students create their own self-care plans.

SAY: Now that you know which areas you would like to give more attention to, it's time to create a self-care plan! Take a look at the document titled, "**Self-Care Plan Examples**" to help you fill out your own self-care plan.

Give students about 10 minutes to complete their self-care plans.

? ASK: Would anyone like to share their plans? What activities are you most looking forward to implementing and why?

3. Have students put their plans into action (optional bingo activity).

Encourage students to make a bingo card using Canva or another bingo card generator (there are many online) to track their self-care activities. Have them enter items from their plan into the generator. The items will appear on a bingo card. As they do activities, they can put an "X" on the associated square. If you will be seeing your students regularly after this lesson, you can check in with them about their progress with their bingo cards and have a prize for the first person to fill up a row, column, or diagonal.

4. Wrap up.

SAY: You've learned many components of well-being, and you've learned how to find information and resources to support your well-being. You've made your own self-care plans. Now your goal is to make self-care a habit. Remember to use your plan and add to it as you think of new strategies. Look at your plan and do something on it every day. Try to turn self-care into a habit.

There's lots more to learn about self-care. I'm going to hand out a list of well-being and self-care resources you can take with you. The first section contains information and strategies for taking care of well-being. The second section is a list of hotlines. If you or someone you know is in distress and needs immediate help, there are lots of places to call. Keep the list in a place where you can easily find it.

Hand out **Well-Being and Self-Care Resources.**

Reference

Schwartz, S. J., Waterman, A. S., Vazsonyi, A. T., Zamboanga, B. L., Whitbourne, S. K., Weisskirch, R. S., Vernon, M., Caraway, S. J., Yeong Kim, S., Forthun, L. F., Donnellan M. B., & Ham, L. S. (2011). The association of well-being with health risk behaviors in college-attending young adults. *Applied Developmental Science, 15*, 1, 20–36, https://doi.org/10.1080/10888691.2011.538617

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