

# UMatter In School Weeks Toolkit



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# UMatter In School Weeks Toolkit

## Introduction

**UMatter In School Weeks** focus on empowering students to prioritize mental health, promote kindness, empathy, and inclusion to empower students to foster a supportive school environment. This toolkit provides educators with structured activities, lesson plans, and resources to make **UMatter In School Weeks** impactful and engaging. Each section is designed to be flexible, allowing schools to adapt the materials to their unique needs.

### Welcome to **UMatter In School Weeks**

**UMatter In School Weeks** is a collaborative initiative brought to you by Friendship Circle and Defeat the Label, with support from the Andrew Kukes Foundation for Social Anxiety. This partnership allows us to bring the impactful **UMatter** program to schools nationwide, amplifying its reach and impact.

**UMatter** in School Weeks originated in Michigan, in 2015, as the idea of two West Bloomfield High School students, Ryan Ishbia and Josh Cooper. They brought this idea to the board of **UMatter** at Friendship Circle of Michigan, who helped them bring their vision to life. This toolkit is dedicated to them and to all of the students who are catalysts for change. Their brilliant ideas and leadership inspire and bring impactful initiatives to fruition. We thank them for their vision, passion, and hard work in making a difference.

**UMatter** equips students with tools to build resilience, support peers, and foster a community where everyone feels valued and supported. Defeat the Label's established relationships with thousands of schools enhance this initiative, ensuring its success in creating positive and inclusive school environments.

This toolkit provides schools with practical resources, engaging activities, and actionable strategies to make **UMatter In School Weeks** a meaningful experience for students, educators, faculty and families. Together, we are taking important steps toward a future where every student feels connected, supported, and empowered to thrive.

If you have any questions about this toolkit or need assistance, please feel free to reach out to us at [umatterweeks@defeatthelabel.org](mailto:umatterweeks@defeatthelabel.org).

Thank you for joining us in spreading the **UMatter** message and making a difference in the lives of students everywhere!

## About Defeat the Label

Defeat the Label is a nonprofit organization dedicated to empowering students to create positive and inclusive school environments where everyone feels safe and supported. Through our signature programs—Upstander, the Community Conversation on Bullying, and Stand4Change—we address the far-reaching impacts of bullying on students' mental health and work to inspire meaningful change in schools and communities.

We recognize the critical connection between mental health and bullying, which is why we are honored to partner with Friendship Circle on **UMatter In School Weeks**. This initiative encourages students to support one another, break down barriers of isolation, and prioritize mental health as much as physical health. Together, we are fostering a culture of kindness, inclusion, and support for all students. For more information about Defeat the Label and our programs, please visit [www.defeatthelabel.org](http://www.defeatthelabel.org)

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## Suggested Activities for **UMatter** In School Weeks

- **UMatter In School Weeks Hall of Fame**  
Create a bulletin board for students and staff to recognize peers who have shown kindness, support, or leadership.
- **Positive Affirmation Day**  
Distribute small cards with uplifting messages for students and staff to share with one another.
- **Classroom Conversations**  
Host discussions about the connection between mental health and bullying, using prompts and guides included in the toolkit.
- **Decorate for U\_Matter In School Weeks**  
Create a visual impact with posters, banners, and student artwork promoting kindness and mental health awareness.
- **Wellness Breaks**  
Introduce mindfulness sessions, yoga classes, or relaxation corners to teach students stress management techniques.
- **Speaker Series**  
Partner with local organizations or mental health professionals to host virtual or in-person talks about mental health and peer support.
- **Gratitude Wall**  
Create a space where students and staff can write notes of gratitude to one another.

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## Toolkit Resources

1. **UMatter In School Weeks Planning Guide**  
Step-by-step instructions to help schools organize and execute **UMatter In School Weeks**.
2. **Sample Social Media Posts**  
Pre-written posts to raise awareness and encourage participation.
3. **Lesson Plans and Discussion Guides**  
Structured activities and lesson plans for classrooms.
4. **Customizable Parent Letter Template**  
A ready-to-use template to inform parents about U\_Matter In School Weeks and encourage their involvement.

## UMatter In School Weeks Planning Guide

### Step 1: Assemble a Planning Team

Form a team of students, staff, and parents to plan and organize **UMatter In School Weeks** activities.

### Step 2: Set Goals for the Week

Identify key messages and their positive impact, such as increasing mental health awareness or promoting kindness, empathy and inclusion.

### Step 3: Choose Activities

Select a mix of activities, from the suggested list, that best fit your school's needs and resources.

### Step 4: Create a Schedule

Outline the week's events, ensuring there's something for everyone to participate in.

### Step 5: Promote **UMatter In School Weeks**

Use posters, announcements, and social media to generate excitement and awareness.

### Step 6: Gather Feedback

At the end of the week, collect feedback from participants to improve future events.

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## Sample Social Media Posts for Awareness

- "Kindness is contagious! Let's spread it together during #UMatterWeek. Join us in creating a supportive school community. 🌟❤️"
- "Mental health matters! This #UMatterWeek, we're focusing on empathy, inclusion, and wellness. Let's make a difference! 🏢 #KindnessCounts"
- "Stand up, speak out, and support your peers. Be an Upstander during #UMatterWeek and every day! #NoMoreBullying #DefeattheLabel"
- "Small acts of kindness can have a big impact. What will you do to show someone they matter today? ✨❤️ #UMatterWeek"

## Customizable Parent Letter Template

[School Letterhead]

Dear Parents and Guardians,

We are excited to announce **UMatter In School Weeks** at [School Name], a special initiative to promote kindness, empathy, inclusion, and mental health awareness in our school community. This week will be filled with engaging activities, discussions, and resources designed to empower students and create a supportive environment for everyone.

Highlights of **UMatter In School Weeks** include:

- Daily activities to encourage empathy and kindness
- Classroom discussions on bullying prevention and mental health
- Opportunities for students to take the Upstander Pledge
- A focus on wellness through mindfulness and relaxation sessions

We invite you to join us in making **UMatter In School Weeks** a success by encouraging your child to participate and discussing the importance of these topics at home. Together, we can make a difference!

If you have any questions or would like to get involved, please contact [School Contact Information].

Thank you for your support.

Sincerely,

[Your Name]

[Your Title]



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# Lesson Plans

## Lesson Plan 1: Understanding the Impact of Bullying on Mental Health

**Grade Level:** Middle School/High School

**Duration:** 45 minutes

**Goal:** Students will learn about the connection between bullying and mental health and reflect on ways to foster a supportive environment.

### **Materials:**

- Video on The Ripple Effect of Bullying (video link below)
- Handouts: A list of mental health resources (attached)
- Whiteboard/Chart Paper

### **Activities:**

- **Introduction (10 minutes)**
  - Discuss: "How do you think bullying affects someone's mental health?"
  - Show the short video and ask students to share their initial thoughts (Video here: [The Ripple Effect: A Case Study on Bullying and its Psychological Impact](#) )
- **Small Group Activity (15 minutes)**
  - Divide students into groups of 4–5
  - Give each group a scenario (e.g. cyberbullying, exclusion, physical intimidation)
  - Ask them to identify:
    - How the person being bullied might feel
    - How their mental health might be affected
    - What could others do to help?
  - Have the groups share their findings with the class
- **Reflection and Discussion (15 minutes)**
  - Use guiding questions:
    - Why is it important to address bullying?
    - How can we make our school a safe space for everyone?
    - What does being an Upstander look like in real life?
  - Emphasize available resources and encourage students to speak up if they or someone they know is struggling

## Mental Health Resources Handout

Mental health is as important as physical health. If you or someone you know is struggling, reaching out for support is a vital first step. Below is a list of trusted mental health resources for immediate assistance, ongoing support, and general information.

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Emergency and Crisis Support If you or someone you know is in immediate danger, call 911 or your local emergency services.

- **National Suicide Prevention Lifeline**  
**Call or Text: 988**  
**Website: [988lifeline.org](https://988lifeline.org)**  
Offers 24/7, free and confidential support for people in distress and crisis.
- **Crisis Text Line**  
**Text: HOME to 741741**  
**Website: [crisistextline.org](https://crisistextline.org)**  
Provides free, 24/7 support via text.
- **Trevor Project (for LGBTQ+ Youth)**  
**Call: 1-866-488-7386**  
**Text: START to 678678**  
**Website: [thetrevorproject.org](https://thetrevorproject.org)**  
Specialized crisis support for LGBTQ+ youth.
- **Trans Lifeline**  
**Call: 877-565-8860**  
**Website: [translifeline.org](https://translifeline.org)**  
Peer support hotline run by and for transgender people.

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## Counseling and Therapy Resources

- **BetterHelp**  
**Website: [betterhelp.com](https://betterhelp.com)**  
Online counseling platform offering affordable therapy with licensed therapists.



- **Psychology Today Therapist Finder**

**Website:** [psychologytoday.com](https://psychologytoday.com)

A directory to find therapists, psychiatrists and mental health professionals near you.

- **SAMHSA's Behavioral Health Treatment Services Locator**

**Website:** [findtreatment.samhsa.gov](https://findtreatment.samhsa.gov)

Searchable directory of substance abuse and mental health treatment facilities.

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### Hotlines for Specific Needs

- **National Eating Disorders Association (NEDA)**

**Call or Text:** 1-800-931-2237

**Website:** [nationaleatingdisorders.org](https://nationaleatingdisorders.org)

- **National Domestic Violence Hotline**

**Call:** 1-800-799-7233 (SAFE)

**Website:** [thehotline.org](https://thehotline.org)

Live chat also available.

- **Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA)**

**Call:** 1-800-662-4357 (HELP)

**Website:** [samhsa.gov](https://samhsa.gov)

Free and confidential treatment referral.

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### Youth and Teen-Specific Resources

- **YouthLine**

**Call:** 877-968-8491

**Text:** teen2teen to 839863

**Website:** [oregonyouthline.org](https://oregonyouthline.org)

A teen-to-teen crisis and helpline.

- **Your Life Your Voice (Boys Town)**

**Call:** 1-800-448-3000

**Text:** VOICE to 20121

**Website:** [yourlifeyourvoice.org](https://yourlifeyourvoice.org)

## Apps for Mental Health and Wellness

- **Calm**  
Focuses on meditation, sleep, and relaxation techniques.  
**Website:** [calm.com](https://calm.com)
- **Headspace**  
Offers guided meditation and mindfulness exercises.  
**Website:** [headspace.com](https://headspace.com)
- **Moodpath**  
Assists with mood tracking and mental health insights.  
**Website:** [moodpath.de/en](https://moodpath.de/en)

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**Local Support and Community** If your school or community has specific mental health resources, include them below:

- **School counselor contact information:**

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- **Local mental health clinic contact:**

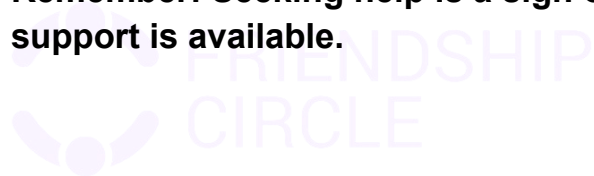
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- **Community hotline:**

\_\_\_\_\_

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**Remember: Seeking help is a sign of strength. You are not alone, and support is available.**



## **Lesson Plan 2: Empathy in Action**

**Grade Level:** Middle School

**Duration:** 30–40 minutes

**Goal:** Students will understand the concept of empathy and practice showing kindness in everyday situations.

### **Materials:**

- "Empathy Bingo" handout (attached)
- Story or video: "Walk in Someone Else's Shoes" (video link below)
- Markers/crayons for younger students

### **Activities:**

- **Warm-Up (5 minutes)**
  - Ask: "What does empathy mean? Can anyone share a time they showed empathy?"
  - Define empathy: "Empathy is understanding how someone else feels and trying to help"
- **Interactive Storytime or Video (10 minutes)**
  - Read a story or show a video about someone overcoming challenges with the help of kindness. (Video Here: [Walk a Mile In Someone Else's Shoes](#) )
  - Pause to ask:
    - "How do you think the person felt?"
    - "What would you do in that situation?"
    - "If you were the person going through the challenge, what would you want someone to do for you? How could they help or support you?"
- **Empathy Bingo (15 minutes)**
  - Pass out "Empathy Bingo" cards with actions like:
    - "Compliment a classmate"
    - "Help someone who looks sad"
    - "Stand up for someone being teased"
  - Encourage students to complete as many acts as they can during the week and share their experiences at the end of **UMatter In School Weeks**.

## Sample Empathy Bingo Card

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Helped someone feel included	Listened without interrupting	Asked someone how they feel	Gave a sincere compliment	Helped solve a problem
Thanked someone sincerely	Comforted someone who was upset	Shared something willingly	Stood up for someone	Asked "How can I help?"
Made eye contact when listening	Apologized for a mistake	Gave someone encouragement	Showed patience	Took the time to get to know someone new
Smiled at someone	Helped someone with a task	Said "Thank you"	Reached out to check on a friend	Celebrated someone's success
Invited someone to join in	Acknowledged someone's feelings	Shared a happy moment	Helped clean up	Spoke up to promote fairness

**B I N G O**


## **Lesson Plan 3: Stigma and Mental Health Awareness**

**Grade Level:** High School

**Duration:** 50 minutes

**Goal:** Students will learn about the stigma often associated with mental health, identify ways to reduce it, and commit to creating a supportive community.

### **Materials:**

- Infographic and statistics on mental health stigma among teens (attached)
- Worksheet: "Breaking the Stigma" (attached)
- Access to anonymous question box
- Post-It notes to pass out to students

### **Activities:**

- **Icebreaker (5 minutes)**
  - Write "Mental Health Is..." on the board in front of the class
  - Ask students to write one word or phrase, to complete the sentence, on their sticky notes
  - Assure students that their written responses will be anonymous
  - Collect post-it notes from students, without reading them (to ensure anonymity) and stick them to the board near the "Mental Health Is..." prompt
  - Discuss common misconceptions and facts (Reference statistics attached)
- **Group Discussion (15 minutes)**
  - Present a short infographic with supporting statistics. Example discussion prompts:
    - Why do you think people hesitate to talk about mental health?
    - How can stigma prevent someone from seeking help?
  - Encourage students to share their thoughts and listen respectfully
- **Breaking the Stigma Activity (20 minutes)**
  - Hand out "Breaking the Stigma" worksheets with prompts such as:
    - "One thing I wish people knew about mental health is..."
    - "I can support my peers by..."
    - "One way to reduce stigma is..."
  - Allow students to work independently or in pairs.
- **Wrap-Up (10 minutes)**
  - Optional: Allow students to anonymously ask questions via the question box
  - Share key takeaways and encourage ongoing conversations about mental health

## **Breaking the Stigma**

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Instructions:** Reflect on the questions below to explore your thoughts about mental health and ways to reduce stigma.

1. One thing I wish people knew about mental health is:

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2. How can you support a friend or peer who is struggling with their mental health?

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3. List three ways we can reduce stigma around mental health in our school or community:

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4. Why is it important to talk about mental health?

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## Common Misconceptions About Youth Mental Health

- **Mental health issues are just a phase:** Many people believe that mental health struggles in youth are simply part of growing up and will pass on their own. This can prevent early intervention.
- **Youth don't experience serious mental health problems:** It's a misconception that children and teens don't face issues like depression or anxiety at the same severity as adults.
- **If a young person talks about their feelings, they're just seeking attention:** Dismissing their emotions this way can discourage youth from seeking help or expressing themselves.
- **Mental health issues are always visible:** Some youth may appear fine outwardly while silently struggling with their mental health.
- **Only "bad" parenting causes mental health issues:** While a supportive home environment is important, many mental health challenges stem from biological, environmental, and social factors.
- **Talking about mental health will make things worse:** Open and supportive conversations about mental health can help youth feel less alone and more empowered to seek help.
- **Therapy is only for extreme cases:** Therapy can be beneficial for all youth, even those dealing with mild stress or emotional challenges.
- **Medications for youth mental health are always harmful:** In some cases, medications prescribed by a professional can be a necessary and effective part of treatment.
- **Youth with mental health challenges can't succeed:** With proper support, young people can overcome challenges and thrive in school, relationships, and life.



## **Statistics About Youth Mental Health**

- **50% of all lifetime cases of mental illness begin by age 14.**  
(Source: National Alliance on Mental Illness, NAMI, 2023)
- **17% of high school students have seriously considered attempting suicide in the past year.**  
(Source: Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System, CDC, 2023)
- **Only about 20% of children with a diagnosable mental health condition receive the treatment they need.**  
(Source: Child Mind Institute, 2023)
- **Anxiety disorders affect 9.4% of children aged 3–17 (approximately 5.8 million).**  
(Source: CDC, 2023)
- **Depression affects 4.4% of children aged 3–17 (approximately 2.7 million).**  
(Source: CDC, 2023)
- **Suicide is the second leading cause of death among youth aged 10–24.**  
(Source: CDC, 2023)
- **70% of teens report anxiety and depression as major problems among their peers.**  
(Source: Pew Research Center, 2022)



## **Lesson Plan 4: Building Resilience**

**Grade Level:** Middle School/High School

**Duration:** 40 minutes

**Goal:** Students will understand the concept of resilience and develop skills to manage challenges in healthy ways.

### **Materials:**

- Worksheet: "Resilience in Action" (link below)
- Short video: "What is Resilience?" (video link below)
- Whiteboard/chart paper and markers

### **Activities:**

- **Introduction (10 minutes)**
  - Define resilience: "Resilience is the ability to bounce back from challenges and keep moving forward"
  - Show the short video and ask: "What does resilience mean to you?" (Video Here: [What Is Resilience](#) )
- **Group Activity (20 minutes)**
  - Divide students into small groups and provide scenarios (e.g. failing a test, conflict with a friend, trying a new activity)
  - Ask groups to brainstorm:
    - How might someone feel in this situation?
    - What strategies could help them bounce back from a negative feeling?
  - Have each group share their ideas with the class
- **Reflection (10 minutes)**
  - Ask students to complete the "Resilience in Action" worksheet
  - Discuss key takeaways and emphasize the importance of seeking support when needed



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## **Resilience in Action**

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Instructions:** Reflect on resilience and how it can positively impact your life and strengthen your mental health.

1. Describe a time when you faced a challenge and overcame it. What helped you be resilient and succeed in that situation?

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2. What are three things you can do to build resilience when facing future challenges?

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

3. Who, in your life, supports you during difficult times and how do they help?

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4. What is one thing you will commit to doing this week to strengthen your resilience?

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## **Lesson Plan 5: The Power of Gratitude**

**Grade Level:** Middle School

**Duration:** 30 minutes

**Goal:** Students will understand how practicing gratitude can improve mental health and relationships.

### **Materials:**

- Gratitude journals or blank paper
- Markers/crayons for younger students
- Video: "The Science of Gratitude" (link below)

### **Activities:**

- **Warm-Up (5 minutes)**
  - Ask: "What does it mean to be grateful? Can you share one thing you're thankful for today?"
- **Gratitude Journals (20 minutes)**
  - Provide each student with a journal or piece of paper
  - Ask them to write or draw three things they are grateful for
  - Optional: Show the video and discuss how gratitude impacts mental health video here: [YouTube: The Science of Gratitude](#)
- **Sharing (5 minutes)**
  - Invite students to share one thing they wrote or drew (optional)
  - Encourage students to continue their gratitude practice at home



## **Lesson Plan 6: Healthy Friendships**

**Grade Level:** Middle School/High School

**Duration:** 45 minutes

**Goal:** Students will learn the characteristics of healthy friendships and how to navigate challenges in relationships, in a healthy way.

### **Materials:**

- Handout: "Healthy vs. Unhealthy Friendships" (attached)
- Whiteboard/chart paper

### **Activities:**

- **Introduction (10 minutes)**
  - Discuss: "What makes a good friend?"
  - Create a list of traits, offered and discussed by students, on the board
- **Scenario Activity (20 minutes)**
  - Divide students into small groups and provide scenarios to discuss (e.g. a friend spreading rumors, disagreements, feeling excluded)
  - Ask groups to identify:
    - Is this a healthy or unhealthy situation?
    - How could the situation be addressed?
  - Have each group present their ideas
- **Reflection (15 minutes)**
  - Distribute the "Healthy vs. Unhealthy Friendships" (attached)
  - Discuss strategies for maintaining healthy relationships and seeking help when needed



## **Healthy vs. Unhealthy Friendships**

### **Healthy Friendships:**

- Mutual respect
- Trust and honesty
- Support during good and bad times
- Encouragement for personal growth
- Open communication

### **Unhealthy Friendships:**

- Control or manipulation
- Dishonesty or betrayal
- Frequent conflict without resolution
- Jealousy or possessiveness
- Lack of respect for boundaries

### **Tips for Building Healthy Friendships:**

- Be a good listener
- Express your feelings honestly and kindly
- Respect your friend's boundaries and feelings
- Be supportive and celebrate their successes
- Address conflicts calmly and constructively



## **Lesson Plan 7: Stress Management 101**

**Grade Level:** High School

**Duration:** 50 minutes

**Goal:** Students will identify stressors and learn practical techniques to manage stress effectively.

### **Materials:**

- Handouts: "Stress Management Strategies" and "Stress Log Worksheet" (attached)
- Whiteboard/markers

### **Activities:**

- **Warm-Up (10 minutes)**
  - Ask: "What is stress? How do you know when you're feeling stressed?"
  - Write student responses on the board and briefly discuss the difference between positive and negative stress
- **Stress Identification (15 minutes)**
  - Hand out the "Stress Log Worksheet" and ask students to reflect on the past week
  - Have them write down three situations that caused stress and how they responded to those situations
  - Discuss common stressors, as a class, and how they might affect mental and physical health
- **Stress Management Strategies (20 minutes)**
  - Provide the "Stress Management Strategies" handout to the class (attached)
  - Teach three techniques (e.g. deep breathing, progressive muscle relaxation, and time management tips)
  - Practice one technique, together, as a class
- **Reflection and Wrap-Up (5 minutes)**
  - Ask: "Which strategy do you think would work best for you? Why?"
  - Encourage students to keep using the stress log to monitor and manage their stress

## Stress Management Strategies

### Strategies for Managing Stress:

1. **Deep Breathing:** Practice inhaling deeply through your nose, holding for a few seconds, and exhaling slowly.
2. **Exercise:** Engage in physical activities like walking, dancing, or yoga to release endorphins.
3. **Time Management:** Break tasks into smaller steps and set realistic goals.
4. **Journaling:** Write down your thoughts and feelings to process emotions.
5. **Mindfulness:** Focus on the present moment through meditation or grounding exercises.
6. **Healthy Habits:** Get enough sleep, eat nutritious foods, and stay hydrated.

**Remember:** It's okay to ask for help if you're feeling overwhelmed. Reach out to a trusted adult or counselor.

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## **Stress Log**

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Instructions:** Use this log to track your stressors and reflect on how you manage them.

<b>Date</b>	<b>What caused your stress?</b>	<b>How did you feel?</b>	<b>How did you respond?</b>	<b>What could you do differently?</b>
Example: 1/2	Upcoming test	Nervous, overwhelmed	Took deep breaths, studied	Start studying earlier

## **Lesson Plan 8: Acts of Kindness**

**Grade Level:** Elementary/Middle School

**Duration:** 30–40 minutes

**Goal:** Students will learn about the ripple effect of kindness and brainstorm ways to spread positivity in their school community.

### **Materials:**

- Video: "The Ripple Effect of Kindness" (Video link below)
- Handout: "Kindness Challenge" (attached)
- Markers/crayons for younger students

### **Activities:**

- **Warm-Up (5 minutes)**
  - Ask: "What does kindness mean to you? Can you share an example of when someone was kind to you?"
  - Define kindness: "Kindness is being considerate and caring towards others"
- **Kindness in Action (10 minutes)**
  - Show the video and discuss how small acts of kindness can have a big impact  
Video here: [Kindness: The World We Make | Ripple Effect | Pay It Forward ...](#)
  - Ask: "What are some simple ways we can be kind every day?"
- **Kindness Challenge (20 minutes)**
  - Hand out the "Kindness Challenge" worksheet with a list of actions (e.g. compliment someone, help a teacher, include someone new at lunch)
  - Encourage students to complete as many challenges as they can throughout the week
  - Younger students can illustrate their favorite act of kindness
- **Reflection (5 minutes)**
  - Discuss: "How did it feel to show kindness? How do you think it affected others?"
  - Encourage students to continue spreading kindness beyond **UMatter In School Weeks**.

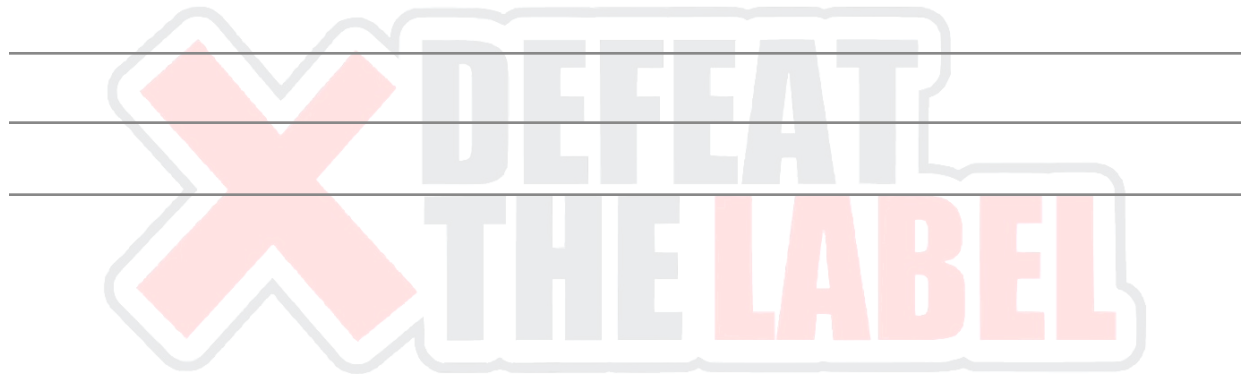
## **Kindness Challenge**

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Instructions:** Complete as many acts of kindness as you can this week. Check them off as you go!

**Reflection:** What act of kindness made the biggest impact on you or someone else?



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## **Lesson Plan 9: Digital Citizenship**

**Grade Level:** Middle School/High School

**Duration:** 50 minutes

**Goal:** Students will learn the importance of responsible online behavior and strategies for creating a positive digital presence.

### **Materials:**

- Handout: "Think Before You Post" (attached)
- Short video: "Digital Footprints" (Video link below)

### **Activities:**

- **Warm-Up (10 minutes)**
  - Ask: "What does it mean to be a good digital citizen? Why is it important?"
  - Discuss examples of positive and negative online behavior
- **Understanding Digital Footprints (15 minutes)**
  - Show the video and ask: "What is a digital footprint? How can it affect your future?" (Video here [📺 Digital Footprint Video](#) )
  - Hand out the "Think Before You Post" guide and discuss the importance of privacy and respectful communication
- **Scenario Discussion (20 minutes)**
  - Divide students into small groups and provide online scenarios (e.g. cyberbullying, oversharing, responding to mean comments)
  - Ask: "How would you handle this situation in a way that shows responsible digital citizenship?"
  - Have each group share their responses with the class
- **Wrap-Up (5 minutes)**
  - Emphasize the importance of being an Upstander online and our responsibility to report harmful behavior.

## **Think Before You Post**

### **The THINK Checklist:**

Before you post online, ask yourself:

- **T:** Is it True?
- **H:** Is it Helpful?
- **I:** Is it Inspiring?
- **N:** Is it Necessary?
- **K:** Is it Kind?

### **Tips for Safe Posting:**

- Avoid sharing personal information like your address or phone number.
- Be mindful of how your posts might affect others.
- Think about the long-term impact of what you share online.

**Remember:** What you post online stays online. Be kind and responsible with your words.

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## **Lesson Plan 10: Self-Care and Mental Health**

**Grade Level:** Middle School/High School

**Duration:** 45 minutes

**Goal:** Students will understand the concept of self-care and create a personalized self-care plan.

### **Materials:**

- Worksheet: "My Self-Care Plan" (attached)
- Whiteboard/markers

### **Activities:**

- **Introduction (10 minutes)**
  - Ask: "What does self-care mean? Why is it important?"
  - Define self-care: "Self-care is taking steps to care for your physical, emotional, and mental well-being"
  - Brainstorm examples of self-care activities as a class
- **Self-Care Plan (20 minutes)**
  - Distribute the "My Self-Care Plan" worksheet
  - Encourage students to identify activities they enjoy in areas like relaxation, physical activity, hobbies, and social connection
  - Optional: Share examples from your own self-care routine
- **Sharing and Discussion (10 minutes)**
  - Invite students to share one activity from their plan (optional)
  - Discuss: "How can practicing self-care help us in stressful times?"
- **Wrap-Up (5 minutes)**
  - Encourage students to practice their self-care plans and revisit them regularly



## My Self-Care Plan

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Instructions:** Fill out the sections below to create your personal self-care plan.

1. **Physical Self-Care:** What activities help you take care of your body?

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

2. **Emotional Self-Care:** How do you manage your feelings and stress?

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

3. **Social Self-Care:** Who can you spend time with to feel supported?

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

4. **Relaxation Activities:** What helps you unwind and recharge?

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

5. **Self-Care Goals:** What is one thing you will do this week to take care of yourself?

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

## Worksheets and Handouts for U Matter In School Weeks

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### Mental Health Resources Handout

**Introduction** Mental health is as important as physical health. If you or someone you know is struggling, reaching out for support is a vital first step. Below is a list of trusted mental health resources for immediate assistance, ongoing support, and general information.

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**Emergency and Crisis Support** If you or someone you know is in immediate danger, call 911 or your local emergency services.

- **National Suicide Prevention Lifeline**

Call or Text: **988**

Website: [988lifeline.org](https://988lifeline.org)

Offers 24/7, free, and confidential support for people in distress and crisis.

- **Crisis Text Line**

Text: **HOME** to **741741**

Website: [crisistextline.org](https://crisistextline.org)

Provides free, 24/7 support via text.

- **Trevor Project (for LGBTQ+ Youth)**

Call: **1-866-488-7386**

Text: **START** to **678678**

Website: [thetrevorproject.org](https://thetrevorproject.org)

Specialized crisis support for LGBTQ+ youth.

- **Trans Lifeline**

Call: **877-565-8860**

Website: [translifeline.org](https://translifeline.org)

Peer support hotline run by and for transgender people.

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### Counseling and Therapy Resources

- **BetterHelp**

Website: [betterhelp.com](https://betterhelp.com)

Online counseling platform offering affordable therapy with licensed therapists.

- **Psychology Today Therapist Finder**

Website: [psychologytoday.com](https://psychologytoday.com)

A directory to find therapists, psychiatrists, and mental health professionals near you.



- **SAMHSA's Behavioral Health Treatment Services Locator**  
Website: [findtreatment.samhsa.gov](https://findtreatment.samhsa.gov)  
Searchable directory of substance abuse and mental health treatment facilities.
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### Hotlines for Specific Needs

- **National Eating Disorders Association (NEDA)**  
Call or Text: **1-800-931-2237**  
Website: [nationaleatingdisorders.org](https://nationaleatingdisorders.org)
  - **National Domestic Violence Hotline**  
Call: **1-800-799-7233** (SAFE)  
Website: [thehotline.org](https://thehotline.org)  
Live chat also available.
  - **Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA)**  
Call: **1-800-662-4357** (HELP)  
Website: [samhsa.gov](https://samhsa.gov)  
Free and confidential treatment referral.
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### Youth and Teen-Specific Resources

- **YouthLine**  
Call: **877-968-8491**  
Text: **teen2teen** to **839863**  
Website: [oregonyouthline.org](https://oregonyouthline.org)  
A teen-to-teen crisis and helpline.
  - **Your Life Your Voice (Boys Town)**  
Call: **1-800-448-3000**  
Text: **VOICE** to **20121**  
Website: [yourlifeyourvoice.org](https://yourlifeyourvoice.org)
- 

### Apps for Mental Health and Wellness

- **Calm**  
Focuses on meditation, sleep, and relaxation techniques.  
Website: [calm.com](https://calm.com)
- **Headspace**  
Offers guided meditation and mindfulness exercises.  
Website: [headspace.com](https://headspace.com)

- **Moodpath**

Assists with mood tracking and mental health insights.

Website: [moodpath.de/en](https://moodpath.de/en)

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**Local Support and Community** If your school or community has specific mental health resources, include them below:

- School counselor contact information: \_\_\_\_\_
- Local mental health clinic contact: \_\_\_\_\_
- Community hotline: \_\_\_\_\_

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**Remember:** Seeking help is a sign of strength. You are not alone, and support is available.

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## Sample Empathy Bingo Card

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Helped someone feel included	Listened without interrupting	Asked someone how they feel	Gave a sincere compliment	Helped solve a problem
Thanked someone sincerely	Comforted someone who was upset	Shared something willingly	Stood up for someone	Asked "How can I help?"
Made eye contact when listening	Apologized for a mistake	Gave someone encouragement	Showed patience	Took the time to get to know someone new
Smiled at someone	Helped someone with a task	Said "Thank you"	Reached out to check on a friend	Celebrated someone's success
Invited someone to join in	Acknowledged someone's feelings	Shared a happy moment	Helped clean up	Spoke up to promote fairness

**B I N G O**


## **Breaking the Stigma**

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Instructions:** Reflect on the questions below to explore your thoughts about mental health and ways to reduce stigma.

1. One thing I wish people knew about mental health is:

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2. How can you support a friend or peer who is struggling with their mental health?

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3. List three ways we can reduce stigma around mental health in our school or community:

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

4. Why is it important to talk about mental health?

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## **Resilience in Action**

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Instructions:** Reflect on resilience and how you can strengthen it in your life.

1. Describe a time when you faced a challenge and overcame it. What helped you succeed?

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2. What are three things you can do to build resilience when facing future challenges?

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

3. Who in your life supports you during difficult times, and how do they help?

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4. What is one thing you will commit to doing this week to strengthen your resilience?

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FRIENDSHIP  
CIRCLE



## **Healthy vs. Unhealthy Friendships**

### **Healthy Friendships:**

- Mutual respect
- Trust and honesty
- Support during good and bad times
- Encouragement for personal growth
- Open communication

### **Unhealthy Friendships:**

- Control or manipulation
- Dishonesty or betrayal
- Frequent conflict without resolution
- Jealousy or possessiveness
- Lack of respect for boundaries

### **Tips for Building Healthy Friendships:**

- Be a good listener
- Express your feelings honestly and kindly
- Respect your friend's boundaries and feelings
- Be supportive and celebrate their successes
- Address conflicts calmly and constructively



## **Stress Management Strategies**

### **Strategies for Managing Stress:**

1. **Deep Breathing:** Practice inhaling deeply through your nose, holding for a few seconds, and exhaling slowly.
2. **Exercise:** Engage in physical activities like walking, dancing, or yoga to release endorphins.
3. **Time Management:** Break tasks into smaller steps and set realistic goals.
4. **Journaling:** Write down your thoughts and feelings to process emotions.
5. **Mindfulness:** Focus on the present moment through meditation or grounding exercises.
6. **Healthy Habits:** Get enough sleep, eat nutritious foods, and stay hydrated.

**Remember:** It's okay to ask for help if you're feeling overwhelmed. Reach out to a trusted adult or counselor.

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## **Stress Log**

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Instructions:** Use this log to track your stressors and reflect on how you manage them.

<b>Date</b>	<b>What caused your stress?</b>	<b>How did you feel?</b>	<b>How did you respond?</b>	<b>What could you do differently?</b>
Example: 1/2	Upcoming test	Nervous, overwhelmed	Took deep breaths, studied	Start studying earlier

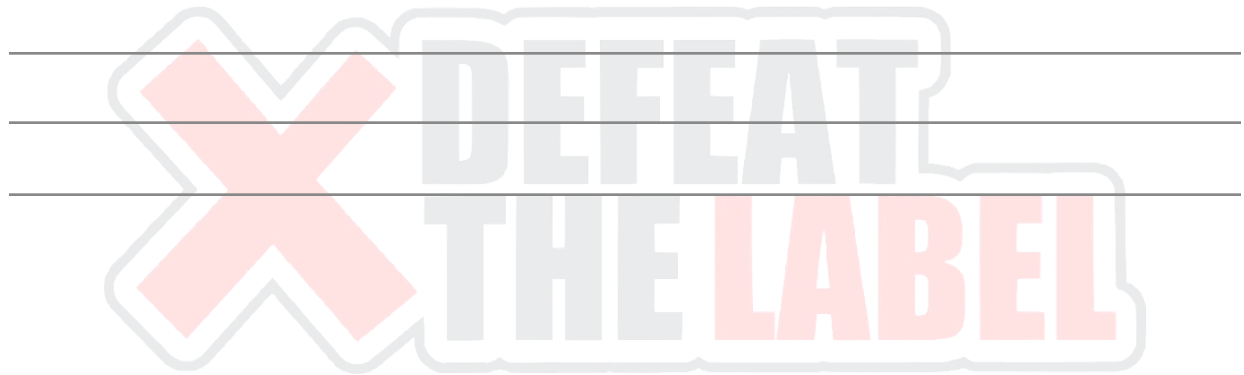
## **Kindness Challenge**

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Instructions:** Complete as many acts of kindness as you can this week. Check them off as you go!

**Reflection:** What act of kindness made the biggest impact on you or someone else?



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## **Think Before You Post**

### **The THINK Checklist:**

Before you post online, ask yourself:

- **T:** Is it True?
- **H:** Is it Helpful?
- **I:** Is it Inspiring?
- **N:** Is it Necessary?
- **K:** Is it Kind?

### **Tips for Safe Posting:**

- Avoid sharing personal information like your address or phone number.
- Be mindful of how your posts might affect others.
- Think about the long-term impact of what you share online.

**Remember:** What you post online stays online. Be kind and responsible with your words.

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## My Self-Care Plan

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Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Instructions:** Fill out the sections below to create your personal self-care plan.

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- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

2. **Emotional Self-Care:** How do you manage your feelings and stress?

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

3. **Social Self-Care:** Who can you spend time with to feel supported?

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

4. **Relaxation Activities:** What helps you unwind and recharge?

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

5. **Self-Care Goals:** What is one thing you will do this week to take care of yourself?

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

## Additional Resources for Teachers and Parents

### Additional Resources for Teachers:

- Provide **conversation starters** for parents to use at home.
- Share **self-care tips** for students to try, such as journaling or mindfulness.
- Include a list of **books and videos** on bullying prevention and mental health awareness for further exploration.

### Conversation Starters for Parents to Use at Home

Here are some questions and prompts to help parents discuss bullying, kindness, and mental health with their children:

#### General Well-Being

- “What was the best part of your day today? Was there anything that made you feel upset or worried?”
- “How do you usually feel when you’re around your friends at school? Do they make you feel supported?”

#### Bullying and Peer Interactions

- “Have you ever seen someone being treated unfairly at school? What did you do? How did it make you feel?”
- “Do you feel comfortable talking to me or another adult if you or a friend is being bullied?”
- “What do you think it means to be kind? Can you think of a time someone was really kind to you?”

#### Mental Health Awareness

- “When you’re feeling stressed or sad, what helps you feel better? Is there something I can do to support you?”
- “Sometimes people struggle with their emotions, and that’s okay. Have you ever felt this way? How did you handle it?”
- “What do you think about talking to a counselor or trusted adult when you feel overwhelmed? Why might that help?”

#### Fostering Inclusion

- “Have you ever noticed someone sitting alone or looking upset at school? What do you think we could do to make them feel included?”
- “What’s one thing you could do tomorrow to make someone else’s day better?”

## Building Trust and Confidence

- “If you were in a difficult situation at school, how would you want me to help you? It’s okay to ask for help.”
  - “You’re important to me, and I want you to know you can tell me anything. How can I show you that I’m here for you?”
- 

## Self-Care Tips for Students

Encourage students to take care of their mental health with these age-appropriate self-care strategies:

### For Younger Children

1. **Create a Calm Corner:** A quiet place to color, read, or relax when feeling overwhelmed.
2. **Practice Deep Breathing:** Inhale for 4 seconds, hold for 4 seconds, exhale for 4 seconds.
3. **Write or Draw Feelings:** Use a journal or sketchpad to express emotions.
4. **Go Outside:** Spend time playing or exploring nature to reset and refresh.
5. **Gratitude Jar:** Write down one thing they’re thankful for each day and review it at the end of the week.

### For Tweens and Teens

1. **Limit Social Media Time:** Take regular breaks to disconnect and recharge.
2. **Daily Movement:** Try walking, biking, yoga, or another activity they enjoy.
3. **Create a Playlist:** Put together songs that make them feel happy or calm.
4. **Stay Hydrated and Eat Well:** Remind them to drink water and eat nourishing foods, especially on busy days.
5. **Set Goals for the Day:** Break tasks into small, manageable steps and celebrate when they’re completed.

### For All Ages

1. **Mindfulness Apps:** Try age-appropriate apps like *Headspace for Kids* or *Calm*.
2. **Acts of Kindness:** Encourage them to do something nice for a friend or family member.
3. **Positive Affirmations:** Start the day with statements like, “I am capable,” or, “I can handle this.”
4. **Talk It Out:** Share feelings with a trusted adult, teacher, or friend.
5. **Rest and Sleep:** Ensure they get enough rest to recharge their minds and bodies.