

DEPRESSION: SMALL GROUP ACTIVITIES AND DISCUSSION

Small Group Activity (5 Minutes)

Divide the class in half. Have them draw on large poster paper (using markers or crayons) pictures of things that get them depressed. Share with the class.

SHOW THE VIDEO (16 Minutes)

Small Group Questions (10 Minutes - 5 per group, assign 3 or 4 questions)

1. What things in your life get you depressed?
2. What negative things do you do when you are depressed?
3. What do those things accomplish for you?
4. How important is it to talk to someone when you are depressed?
5. What changes in your life can you make to help you not get so depressed? Do you need some new friends? Should you change your TV habits? Can you get involved in something new?
6. Write down every good thing going on in your life.

Group Activity (10 Minutes)

Ask groups to share what gets them depressed, then have them share what the good things are in their lives. Ask what solutions or life changes can help get someone out of depression.

DEPRESSION: WRAP-UP

DEPRESSION IS A NORMAL PART OF BEING A TEENAGER.

- You are not alone! It can even be caused by physical and hormonal changes taking place in your body.
- You are going through a period of stress as you face decisions about dating, sex, drinking, drugs, how you look, etc.

DEPRESSION CAN LEAD TO DESTRUCTIVE BEHAVIOR IF YOU DON'T DEAL WITH IT NOW.

- Depression can lead to drinking, drugs, sex, eating disorders, violent behavior and self-destructive actions, as you try to escape from your problems.
- These things are never permanent solutions. You need to face your depression and find out what is causing it.

LOOK AT YOUR LIFESTYLE AND SEE WHAT IS MAKING YOU DEPRESSED.

- Are your friends negative?
- Are you depressed because you're stressed out by trying to do too many things?
- Do you need encouraging friends? Do you have a parent or a friend who can talk with you regularly about your problems and depression? If not, find someone, or talk to your teacher, a counselor, or a youth leader.

GET INVOLVED IN HELPING OTHER PEOPLE.

- Helping others gives us positive feelings of accomplishment and self worth. It is not as easy to be depressed when you are giving and helping others!
- Offer specific information about local events, programs, and volunteer opportunities in which teens can get involved.

HOMework: DEPRESSION

HOMework Project: How I feel when I'm depressed.

Using the following questions, explain what it's like for you to be depressed.

1. Describe how you feel when you're depressed.
2. How do you deal with it when you are extremely depressed?
3. What are five common situations or things that get teenagers depressed?
4. How many of those five have you personally experienced?
5. When things get tough, I am most likely to:
 - a) see things as being much worse than they really are
 - b) become extremely angry, even violent
 - c) shut up and not tell anyone how I really feel
 - d) get drunk or high to feel better
 - e) talk to someone about it
6. What are the dangers of A through D? What is the benefit of talking to someone?
7. Name three people you would be willing to talk to when things get bad.
8. What can you realistically do to get out of depression or to prevent yourself from becoming so depressed?

HOMework Project: What Makes Me Depressed?

Draw a line down the middle of a piece of paper. Label the left side "Others" and the right side "Myself." Under "Others," list the expectations others have of you and that person's name. Under "Myself," list the goals and expectations you have of yourself. Draw lines connecting the expectations that match, and put a star by those expectations that you feel are ok or realistic. Draw a heavy black line through the expectations you don't like, and then answer the following questions:

1. What things are you experiencing that are causing you to be depressed?
2. You often can't change your circumstances, but you can change your attitude toward them. Go back to your answers for #1 and write down attitude changes that might prevent you from feeling depressed.
3. List every good thing in your life.
4. It's ok to be sad, disappointed and depressed, but if you don't deal with the problem, it will only get worse. Write the details of those depressing situations on a piece of scrap paper. Crumple them up and throw them away. Write on another piece of paper your plan of action to prevent depression from taking over. Do you need new friends, someone to talk to, or a change in attitude? Don't let depression overtake you. Find someone to talk to and tell them how you are feeling.