

Module 3: Acts of Kindness



Subject: Psychological Well-being

Duration of Unit: 2 classes (45 min each)

Central Message: People who practice acts of kindness and/or who volunteer on a consistent basis become happier and less depressed.



LEARNING GOALS

Enduring Understanding:

- Our own happiness is inseparably linked to the happiness we create for others.

Essential Questions:

- Why do acts of kindness make us happier?
- How does motivation affect happiness?

Learning Outcomes:

Students will:

- Be able to describe multicultural concepts of humanity and compassion.
- Be able to identify various modes of practicing kindness, including planned and unplanned acts.
- Be able to explain why kindness improves wellbeing, and especially intrinsically motivated kindness.

LESSON PLAN

Day 1 Main Topic – Different Kinds of Kindness

- **Challenge Assignment Debrief:** Break students into pairs. Give each member of the pair five minutes to share their experience with the challenge assignment, and remind their partners to practice active constructive responding. (10 mins)
- **Group activity:** Write on the board: “Think of the three happiest people you know.” Ask students to share with their group some of the qualities of these people. Most probably, descriptions like “generous,” “kind,” and “caring” will come up. Make the point that many of the happiest people are those who express generosity and kindness (10 mins).
- **Watch the video on Kindness** (10 mins)
- **Reflection:** Ask students to write down notes on only one of the following questions:
 1. Describe a positive volunteering experience or an act of kindness that you have performed.
 2. Describe a memory of something kind someone did for you.
 3. How did these experiences make you feel? (5 mins)
- **Class Share:** Ask students to volunteer responses. (5 mins)
- **Assignment:** Have students read the following two web pages and write notes on the following questions:
http://www.huffingtonpost.com/mark-setton/dust-drudgery-and-bliss-h_b_289531.html
<http://www.pursuit-of-happiness.org/science-of-happiness/caring/>
 1. “Why is participation by recipients of caring / volunteering activities) important to their own happiness?” (Note: self-efficacy and self-esteem may play a major role).
 2. Why does motivation seem to make a difference to the happiness of volunteers?
 3. Have you had a volunteering experience and if so, how did it go?

Day 2 Main Topic – Different Kinds of Kindness

- **Assignment Debrief:** Write the questions for the previous assignment on the board and have students volunteer responses.
- **Group Discussion:** Facilitate a group discussion based on the questions (10 mins)
- **Watch this video by Kid President on [How to change the world](#).** Ask the class to write a brief reflection on the following questions, and after, ask students to volunteer responses:
 - Do you agree with Kid President?
 - If not, which option do you think is best and why?
- **Group Activity:** Have students break into pairs and talk about someone they know who is facing challenges and the best way to show kindness. (10 min)
- **Assignment (Module 2 Challenge):** Try to perform at least three random acts of kindness this week. Include something that you haven't done before. Exercise a new kindness muscle!

Some ideas:

- Call a relative or a neighbor whom you haven't spoken to in a while. Especially if they live alone, or don't have many friends. Ask how they are doing and practice active listening.
- If you don't do much housework, try a new chore that would benefit someone else. Vacuum clean, tidy up the backyard, etc.
- Leave a surprise in your mailbox for your mail carrier, like a gift certificate or a thank you note.
- Map out your family tree (through interviewing relatives and getting info from the web). In the process, perhaps you can build bridges between family members, and make the whole family more aware of their history.
- Make friends with a new student at school. It's not easy being the new kid on the block.

ASSESSMENT

Summative Assessment:

Student Mental Health Toolkit: Advanced Certificate Course for Educators

- Students submit their **Weekly Happiness Habit Journal** and include their kindness activity along with all previous others.