



**Pack 295 Mental Health Awareness Program
For NOVAs and Webelos**

**Lisa Scarbrough
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Notes

This Mental Health Awareness program for Cub Scouts is created by Lisa Scarbrough of Cub Scout Pack 295 in Guyton, Georgia, modified from the program created for Girl Scouts by the International Bipolar Foundation available online at <https://ibpf.org/girl-scouts-mental-health-awareness-patch>

This program was created to be completed by our Pack's NOVA and Webelos dens. All parents were notified of the content in advance and given the option to have their child participate.

This program is structured to be completed in two meetings, consisting of activities to learn about the brain, types of mental health conditions that affect youth, individuals with mental health who have been successful, and how we should treat all individuals with kindness.

Elements were taken from various resources online to compile this program, and are credited as they are used.

Materials Needed

- Pencils
- Markers, crayons, or colored pencils
- Dice
- Markers (pebbles, coins, caps, seeds, etc.)
- Toolbox with tools (hammer, nails, wrench, saw, large screwdriver)
- Collection of old computer parts

Downloads

- http://media.graytvinc.com/documents/Mental_Health_Awareness_MPP.pdf
- https://drive.google.com/open?id=1uyq5-yfj_vuJdmqFnHllsMedTfFh0HB
<http://faculty.washington.edu/chudler/colorb2.html>
- <http://faculty.washington.edu/chudler/colorb4.html>
- <http://faculty.washington.edu/chudler/pdf/bandn.pdf>
- <http://faculty.washington.edu/chudler/pdf/dominon.pdf>
- <https://www.macmh.org/wp-content/uploads/2010/06/toolsoffriendship.pdf>
- https://www.cornwallhealthyschools.org/documents/stop_stigma_survey_teacher_factsheet.pdf
- <https://dana.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/fact-sheet-high-school-how-does-brain-work-baw.pdf>
- https://dana.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/6-8_Word-Scramble-and-Word-Search_color.pdf (word search)

Meeting 1: Learn about the brain and its role in mental health

1. Read about the brain from Mental_Health_Awareness_MPP.pdf (pages 6, 7, 8, 9)

Also helpful brain diagram from this download:

<https://dana.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/fact-sheet-high-school-how-does-brain-work-baw.pdf>

2. Read “what is mental illness” from <https://walkinourshoes.org/what-is-mental-health>

WHAT DOES "MENTAL HEALTH" MEAN?

Health is the way your body feels and works. Being healthy means more than just not being sick. When your body is healthy, you feel good. You are able to go to school, hang out with friends, and do the things you need to do every day.

A healthy mind lets you learn, play, and understand others. Mental health means having good ways to deal with your feelings and how to enjoy life, even when things are hard. Having a healthy mind and body are both very important. Everyone has good days and bad days. A bad day doesn't mean you have a mental illness, but you can still improve your mental health.

WHAT IS A MENTAL ILLNESS?

Everybody gets sick sometimes. When you have a sore throat, you might take medicine and sleep a lot. If you have a broken arm, you get a cast. Even teachers and parents get sick, and have to take medicine and rest to get better.

Just like physical illness, people can experience a mental illness anytime. You may hear people describe mental illness as a mental disorder, neurological disorder or a mental health challenge. Having a mental illness can change how you think, feel or act. It can sometimes make it harder to do the things you want to do. Just like when your body is sick and you go to a doctor, someone with a mental illness can go to a mental health professional.

Some people act in ways that are hard to understand, but that doesn't necessarily mean they have a mental illness. Actions like being violent, getting mad, smoking or doing drugs are not mental illnesses. These are choices people make. People don't choose to have a mental illness, but they can choose to admit if they're having a hard time. That way, they can get help and start feeling better.

WHAT KINDS OF PEOPLE GET MENTAL ILLNESSES?

All kinds of people can experience a mental illness, including kids. It doesn't matter where you live or what kind of family you have.

No one knows for sure what causes a mental illness. Researchers think it's a mix of what's going on in your body and what's happening around you. Mental health challenges are not caused by doing something wrong. You can't catch a mental illness from somebody else. Anyone can have a mental illness, and anyone can get better, too.

It is also common to know people who have mental illnesses. It doesn't mean they are crazy, it just means life is different in their shoes.

Meeting 1 Activities

Gathering Activity: Word Search about Brain Health

- https://dana.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/6-8_Word-Scramble-and-Word-Search_color.pdf

NOVAs

1. Color and label parts of the brain and neuron
 - Answer sheet:
 - <https://kidshealth.org/en/kids/bfs-nsactivity.html?WT.ac=k-ra>
 - Coloring sheets:
 - <http://faculty.washington.edu/chudler/colorb2.html>
 - <http://faculty.washington.edu/chudler/colorb4.html>
2. Play Brains and Neurons Game
 - <http://faculty.washington.edu/chudler/chgames.html>
 - Materials:
 - Game Board
(<http://faculty.washington.edu/chudler/pdf/bandn.pdf>)
 - Dice or make your own dice.
(<http://faculty.washington.edu/chudler/dice2.html>)
 - Markers (pebbles, coins, caps, seeds, etc.)
3. Homework: Great Achiever Poster (see attachment)

Webelos

1. Neuroscience Dominoes
 - a. <http://faculty.washington.edu/chudler/pdf/dominon.pdf>
2. Neuron Chain Game
 - a. <http://faculty.washington.edu/chudler/outside.html>
 - b. <http://faculty.washington.edu/chudler/lechain.html>
 - c. Neuron Chain is another game of tag. Start with just one player who is "it." This player is the first neuron and tries to tag another player. A tagged player must hold the hand of the first player and together they have to chase the other players. As more and more players are tagged, they are added to the chain of neurons. The game ends when all the players are part of the chain.

Meeting 2: Breaking the Stigmas

WHAT IS STIGMA? <https://walkinourshoes.org/what-is-mental-health>

Have you ever heard unkind words used to describe someone you care about? Have you been called names because the way you look or something else about you?

Labels can hurt. They can make you feel separate from everyone else. Even if you know they are untrue, labels can make you feel bad. Sometimes people who are labeled also get bullied or treated unfairly. When people don't understand how life is in someone else's shoes, they can make unfair and untrue assumptions.

Labels and unfair treatment are results of what we call stigma. Stigma comes from negative and incorrect beliefs, or stereotypes, about groups of people. Fear of being left out or picked on because of who you are is a part of stigma. The effects of stigma can make you feel sad, ashamed or alone.

People with mental health challenges sometimes experience stigma. They get called "crazy" or "mental." These labels are based on stereotypes, not on fact. You can help break down stigma by learning and sharing the truth about mental health.

Meeting 1 Activities

NOVAs

1. Share posters about Great Achievers. Go over the illnesses/non-visible disability for each.
2. Read “The Golden Rule” from page 21 of the IBPF PDF.
2. Review the Scout Law and discuss how it relates to what you have learned about mental illness. Discuss with your den.

Webelos

1. Read STOP Stigma Survey – Factsheet / Teachers’ Notes as a True/False to the group
 - Items 1-6, 10, 13, 14
 - https://www.cornwallhealthyschools.org/documents/stop_stigma_survey_teacher_factsheet.pdf
2. Do Tools of Friendship activity
 - <https://www.macmh.org/wp-content/uploads/2010/06/toolsoffriendship.pdf>
3. Review the Scout Law and discuss how it relates to what you have learned about mental illness. Discuss with your den.

NOVA Homework: Great Achievers

Research one of the individuals below and make a poster (8.5 x 11) about that person's achievements at the next meeting.

- Albert Einstein - dyslexia
- Buzz Aldrin - clinical depression
- Isaac Newton - bipolar disorder, autism, schizophrenia
- Charles Darwin - severe panic disorder, agoraphobia
- John Forbes Nash - schizophrenia (paranoid-type)
- Sigmund Freud - clinical depression
- Thomas Alva Edison - dyslexia
- Kurt Godel - persecutory delusions
- Nikola Tesla - obsessive compulsive disorder
- Yoshiro Nakamatsu - obsessive compulsive disorder

Resources for Parents:

- http://www.mentalhealthministries.net/resources/flyers/famous_people/famouspeople.pdf
- <http://mentalfloss.com/article/12500/11-historical-geniuses-and-their-possible-mental-disorders>
- <https://historycollection.co/20-historical-figures-with-severe-mental-issues-who-shaped-our-world/13/>
- <https://discoveryspot.wordpress.com/2013/10/08/10-world-changing-geniuses-who-suffered-from-mental-illnesses/>

Patches

A patch is supposed to be available for free from the IBF by using their form in the PDF (pages 32-33) and mailing to them. My attempts to reach them via email to confirm they are still available have gone unanswered (as of October 13, 2019). If you use their form to send in, you are checking off the following boxes (modeling Daisies and Brownies):

- Discover #1, #5, #7
- Take Action #6



Other Mental Health Awareness patches available:



https://www.e-patchesandcrests.com/catalogue/patches/health_safety/E698-mental-health.php



<https://www.advantageemblem.com/fun-patches/s-3736-mental-health-awareness.asp>

Letter to Parents for Participation

Dear Parents of NOVAs and Webelos,

Starting this Tuesday, NOVAs and Webelos will be exploring mental health awareness. We will be exploring the functions of the brain, what makes us different, people with mental illness who went on to be successful, and how we can treat all others with kindness. I will be modifying a program created by the International Bipolar Foundation that was created for Girl Scouts from Daisies through Seniors and adding in components to work toward NOVA and Webelos awards.

If you are uncomfortable with your Scout being exposed to this material, you may refrain from participating. You can see the general program here:
http://media.graytvinc.com/documents/Mental_Health_Awareness_MPP.pdf

The topic will be covered on October 15 and November 5 for both groups.

All Cubs who participate in their sessions will earn a Mental Health Awareness patch. NOVAs will count toward requirement 3 of Science Everywhere, and Webelos will count toward requirement 3 of Aware and Care.

Sincerely,

Lisa Scarbrough
Cubmaster
NOVA Counselor/Supernova Mentor
Webelos Den Leader