



Break Free from Depression: A 4-Session Curriculum Addressing Adolescent Depression

Date: 2012 (For resources, this is the publication date. For programs, this is the date posted.)

Information

Type: Program/Practice, Education/Training Program

Organization: Boston Children's Hospital Neighborhood Partnerships

Costs:

The Break Free from Depression curriculum, including the documentary, is free and available online at <http://www.openpediatrics.org/curriculum/break-free-depression> [1]. All materials can be accessed after completion of the online training.

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Developed at Boston Children's Hospital, *Break Free from Depression* is a school-based curriculum designed to increase adolescents' awareness and knowledge about depression, enhance their ability to recognize signs and symptoms in themselves and their friends, and increase students' skills and strategies for finding help for themselves and their peers. This 4-session curriculum for high school students combines didactic and interactive activities.

The cornerstone of the curriculum is a documentary that focuses on a diverse group of real adolescents (not actors) talking about their struggles with depression and suicide in their own words. They discuss the stigma often associated with depression, their symptoms, the course of their illness, and the methods they have used to manage the depression. Each session lasts 45 to 60 minutes and can be taught by high school personnel such as guidance counselors, health teachers, or school nurses, or by community health providers partnered with the school.

The online resources include all materials needed to facilitate the curriculum and to lead workshops for school staff and parents. It is important to note that *Break Free from Depression* is not a treatment or counseling intervention, but rather is a universal program designed for depression awareness.



Suicide Prevention Resource Center

The *Break Free from Depression* curriculum builds on existing research, pilot studies, and program implementation of the Boston Children's Hospital Neighborhood Partnerships Program to raise awareness of depression among adolescents. *Break Free from Depression* is based on best practices and is also informed by feedback from clinicians, students, teachers, and school staff.

Program Objectives

After program implementation, participating students will have:

1. Increased knowledge about depression and suicide;
2. Greater confidence to identify signs of depression and suicide in themselves and their peers;
3. Improved ability to find help for themselves and their peers.

Implementation Essentials

- All school faculty, administrators, and staff should receive basic suicide prevention training, including school protocols and policies regarding students at risk for suicide, prior to using the *Break Free from Depression* curriculum with students.

2012 NSSP Objectives Addressed:

Objective 7.1: Provide training on suicide prevention to community groups that have a role in the prevention of suicide and related behaviors.

Links within this resource

[1] <http://www.openpediatrics.org/curriculum/break-free-depression>

[2] <mailto:molly.jordan@childrens.harvard.edu>

[3] <http://www.bostonchildrens.org/breakfree>

Printed on 05/26/2020 from <https://www.sprc.org/resources-programs/break-free-depression-4-session-curriculum-addressing-adolescent-depression>

The Suicide Prevention Resource Center at EDC is supported by a grant from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), Center for Mental Health Services (CMHS), under Grant No. 5U79SM062297.

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