

Express Yourself!



Not One More:
A Mission to Eliminate
Youth Suicide

Overview

When somebody knows who they are and is confident enough with themselves that they are comfortable letting others know who they are, their mental health skyrockets. Finding one's identity is incredibly important to maintaining one's feelings of worth and individuality. Being able to express this identity and being celebrated for it is exponentially more beneficial than sticking to the crowd.

It is when people can show off who they are, and not be judged for it that communities are built. Recognizing that we are all different – in our personalities, experiences, and desires – helps us to accept one another and put forth our true selves.

This pamphlet will guide you through activities for discovering the different aspects of your personality, and communicating them to others

Objectives

- Make students comfortable with themselves, and more confident about themselves
- Foster community through the sharing of projects

Venue:

- Classroom Activities

Estimated Cost:


- \$-0-

Activities:

- Make a Country
- Curious Cube

"Never bend your head. Hold it high. Look the world straight in the eye."

- Helen Keller



Make a Country



What Is It?

Make a Country is an activity during which students make countries that reflect themselves. These countries include anything the student may wish to express. There are no requirements for detail, coloring, etc. This is done to ensure that the student has complete creative freedom. This activity is intended to foster a student's artistic expression, and result in a better understanding of themselves.

Why It Is Effective!

Making their own country allows students to reflect on the different parts of their personality, their experiences, and their passions. Furthermore, there is no academic pressure or requirements when making countries, so a student can completely be themselves without worry of whether or not it will affect their grade. Since the students' countries are a representation of themselves, students get the opportunity to learn more about their classmates. Also, teachers are able to learn more about what their students are like outside of the classroom. This deeper understanding of one another helps build relationships and helps identify anyone that may be at-risk for suicide.


This activity includes students reflecting upon and illustrating their talents and passions. When someone is able to recognize what they enjoy doing, and what they're good at, it is likely that their confidence will increase. Furthermore, if a student is feeling hopeless, illustrating what they like to do may give them a sense of worth or enjoyment of life that reduces their risk of suicidal ideation.



Take Action

Acquire and provide paper and extra art supplies for students to make their countries. Decide upon a day and time to do the activities. Explain to the class what the activity entails, make sure every member of the class is participating, and assure safety during the activity.

Optional: Can post countries throughout the classroom once they're completed.



Curious Cube

What Is It?

Curious Cubes help students learn about themselves and their classmates. Teachers provide their students with the outline to make a paper cube. On each side of the cube, students answer prompts related to their identity. For example, on Side 1, students may be given the prompt, “What do you want to do when you grow up?” Then, on the corresponding side, students would write and/or draw what they want to be when they grow up. The prompts related to this activity can change dependent upon the students grade, but the aim of the activity remains the same: for students to discover and share about who they are and what they love. After the cubes are completed, students share their creation with the rest of the class so that everyone can learn about each other.

Why It Is Effective!

Curious Cubes allow for students to reflect on and share what they most enjoy. This helps to decrease any feelings of hopelessness that they may be experiencing. Furthermore, since students are invited to share what they have made, community-centered attitudes are likely to grow in the class, thereby decreasing feelings of loneliness. Next, Curious Cubes provide students with something they can keep. This cube serves as a constant reminder of what they love, and can help motivate a student during a hard time. Finally, Curious Cubes give students a sense of accomplishment after making them. This can serve as a confidence boost to any student that may be experiencing feelings of worthlessness.

Take Action

In charge of providing scissors, glue, and paper for students to make their cubes with. Is also in charge of deciding upon what prompts to use, and administering the activity. Is in charge of making sure that all students participate in the making and sharing of Curious Cubes. Is in charge of assuring safety during this activity.

Prompt Ideas!

- What do you like most about yourself?
- What is your favorite thing to do outside of school?
- What's your favorite animal?
- What do you want to be when you grow up?
- What does your perfect weekend look like?
- What is your favorite book?



Acknowledgements


Many Thanks To...

- Marilyn Kennemore—Editor

IMPORTANT

- THIS IS NOT A REPLACEMENT FOR THERAPY OR PROFESSIONAL HELP. THESE ACTIVITIES ARE LISTED TO PROVIDE EASY-TO-ACCESS RESOURCES THAT CAN BE USED TO LESSON FEELINGS OF ANXIETY. TRAUMA SHOULD NOT BE PROCESSED IN A CLASSROOM SETTING. PLEASE SEEK PROFESSIONAL HELP IF YOU ARE SUSPECTED OF HAVING ANXIETY, DEPRESSION, PTSD, OR OTHER MENTAL ILLNESSES.
- To get a list of overall guidelines to follow when doing the activities in the pamphlets please reference the “Safety” page in the Implementation Packet.





Resources

Templates for cubes:

<https://www.google.com/url?sa=i&url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.pinterest.com%2Fpin%2F217087644515547449%2F&psig=AOvVaw0UIqzBe4n5BNi0uAfOT0z3&ust=1616027552736000&source=images&cd=vfe&ved=OCAIQjRxqFwoTCICc1fSJtu8CFQAAAAAdAAAAABAD>

The Importance of Artistic Expression for Mental Health:

<https://artsacad.net/the-need-for-teen-self-expression-through-art/>

Resource for “Make a Country” and “Curious Cube”: *104 Activities that Build Self-esteem, Teamwork, Communication, Anger Management, Self-Discovery and Coping Skills* by Alanna Jones

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-Helen Keller