

# Self Discovery

## Activities:

- Prioritization Circles
- Personal Playlist
- Mental Health Journal Entries



Not One More:  
A Mission to Eliminate  
Youth Suicide

## Overview

It is virtually impossible to talk about teen mental health and suicide prevention without focusing on the topic of self discovery. When someone knows who they are, they are better equipped to face challenging situations such as peer pressure and, in general, are better equipped to handle stress.

However during the developmental ages in which one is in elementary, middle, and high school, it can be overwhelming and confusing to find out who one is. Especially during high school, when one is deciding what the rest of their life looks like, answering the question, “Who am I?” can cause unrest. Establishing practices to help one understand their personality, and learning about these practices in a stress-free environment leads students towards establishing their character.

## Objectives

- Equip students with resources that help them discover who they are
- Increase students’ awareness of what matters to them
- Introduce students to life-long habits that better their mental health

## Venue:

- Classroom Activities

## Estimated Cost:

- \$-0-



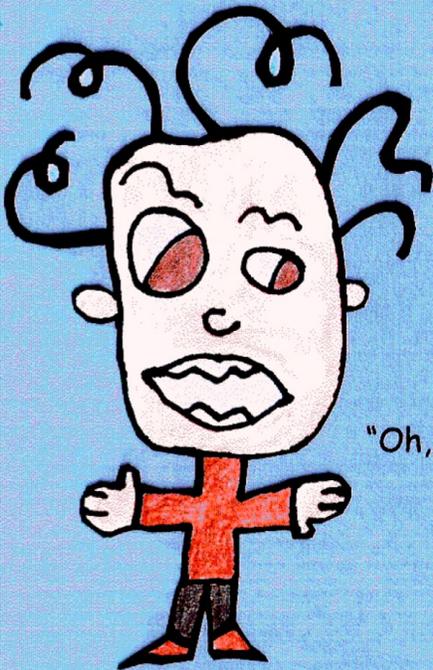
*“I think self discovery is the greatest achievement in life, because once you discover yourself and accept what you are, then you can fulfill your true potential and be happy.”*

*- Marco Pierre White*

# Self Discovery



Kevin and Jack ponder self-discovery...



"Hey, Jack! How's your self-discovery these days?"

"Umm... What's self-discovery?"

"Read this pamphlet."

"I can't read."

"Oh, right. Well, I'll read it to you."



"Woof!"



# Prioritization Circles



## What Is It?

During the activity, “Prioritization Circles”, students visualize and determine what is important to them. To complete this activity, students are given a sheet of paper and art supplies. They then draw 3 circles, the smallest in the center, a mid-sized one around the smallest, and a large one around the mid-sized one. Each circle represents a different level of importance. As the circles grow in size, their contents shrink in significance.

Students fill the circles with words or drawings that are representative of parts of their life. This can be anything from relationships to classes to extra-curricular activities, and so forth. It is up to the students to figure out what is most and least important to them, and complete the circles accordingly.

## Why It Is Effective!

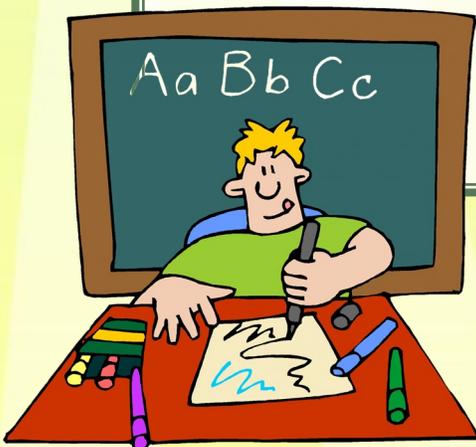
Life frequently feels like a juggling act. It’s very easy to get caught up in the demands of school, extracurriculars, and home life. Sometimes it’s so hard to ‘stay afloat’ that important things such as our health begins to be sacrificed. According to the CDC, 72.7% of high schoolers and 57.8% of middle schoolers are sleep deprived. It’s easy to see where these statistics come from when one considers that students are involved in school, sports, clubs, church, chores, etc.

When completing “Prioritization Circles”, students put everything they’re involved with into perspective. This then helps with reflection on the rationality of where they’re spending most of their time. “Prioritization Circles” also helps students realize that they’re spending less time on the things they enjoy because of outside pressure to focus on things they don’t enjoy. Overall, “Prioritization Circles” assist in knowing the status of every different thing in one’s life, which is necessary when determining who one is.

### Take Action

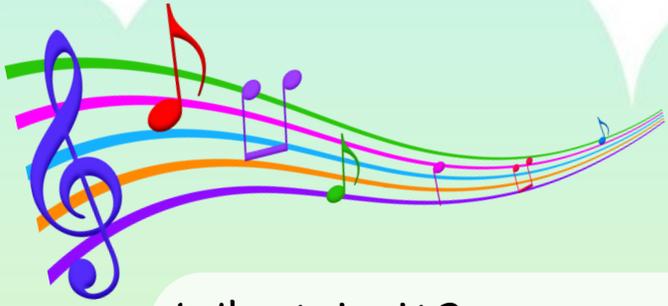
Acquire the paper and art supplies. Decide upon a week and day to do the activity.

Administer the activity. Ensure safety during the activity.



### Extra Steps/ Alternate Activities

Zoom in! As opposed to covering all aspects of a student’s life, Prioritizations Circles can be made to focus on one topic. This helps a student put For example, if a student is overwhelmed with schoolwork, they can make Prioritization Circles to help them weigh the importance of each of their classes.



## Personal Playlist

### What Is It?

In “Personal Playlist”, students develop a playlist that is reflective of themselves. The criteria for songs in each playlist can vary widely. Dependent upon how the teacher wants to administer the activity, playlists can mirror the student’s personality, show how they react to different situations, portray their current mood, etc.

On the determined day of the activity, students use whatever music streaming service they prefer, and make their playlist.

### Why it’s Effective!

Music has been shown to have an incredible connection to the human mind. It can help alleviate stress, boost dopamine, and help teens find a sense of identity. Further research shows that youth spend upwards of forty hours per week listening to music. Teens are extremely connected to music. Therefore, it presents itself as the perfect tool to use for self-discovery.

The ease with which playlists can be accessed, created, and changed is incredibly conducive to changes one experiences throughout life. Personalities go through drastic changes both during and after the teenage years. What’s great about having a “Personal Playlist” is that as you change, the playlist can be changed accordingly.

### Take Action

Whoever decides to lead the activity is in charge of letting their class know when they will make their playlists, and communicates to them that they need to bring an electronic to make their playlist on. Is also in charge of explaining and administering the activity. Is also in charge of assuring that proper safety measures are taken during the making of playlists.



### Extra Steps/Alternate Activities

What if there are no electronics? If this activity is being done in a class where students do not have devices to make their playlists on, the teacher can play a wide variety of songs and have the students reflect upon which resonated with them the most.

**Make a Class Composition!** After students make their playlists, they can inform the teacher of their favorite (appropriate) song. Then, the teacher can add all the songs to a class playlist and play it during an independent work time.



# Mental Health Journal Entries

## What Is It?

In “Mental Health Journal Entries”, students reflect upon a given prompt. There are many different resources available that provide incredible self-discovery and reflection-based prompts that students can spend 15 minutes-1 hour writing about and sharing. Books such as the “Life by the Numbers” series provide amazing reflective opportunities that assist in refocusing our lives and providing different outlooks on life.

## Why It Is Effective!

Journaling has been proven to help with stress-relief, coping, and managing anxiety. Journaling also provides an opportunity for one to reflect on what they can improve upon in a controlled, safe environment. Furthermore, if you decide to use the “Life by the Numbers” books to guide your class’s journaling, there is great diversity in the different types of prompts provided, that address most any situation.

## Take Action

If you’re using a specific book to help facilitate prompts, it is the teacher’s job to pick out a book and prompt before the activity. Next, the teacher needs to decide when their class will be doing the activity. If their class has Mental Health Journals, the teacher will need to communicate to the class to bring their Mental Health Journals on the decided day. The teacher will then explain the prompt they chose and guide their class through writing.

## Extra Steps

If the class feels comfortable in doing so, reflections may be shared amongst students.





## Acknowledgements

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- Emma H.—Illustrator

### \*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

Why It's Important to Properly Prioritize Aspects of Your Life (Especially Mental Health):

<https://oconnorpg.com/importance-prioritizing-mental-health/>

Music's Connection to Teens and Identity

<https://www.parentmap.com/article/teen-music-better-self-esteem>

Journaling's Effect on Mental Health:

<https://www.webmd.com/depression/features/writing-your-way-out-of-depression>

Books to Guide Journaling Prompts:

*The 1 Book: How Many People Does it Take to Make a Difference?* By Kobi Yamada

*The 2 Book: How Will You Create Something Beautiful Together?* By Dan Zadra

*5: Where Will You be Five Years from Today?* By Kobi Yamada

*The 7 Book: How Many Days of a Week Can be Extraordinary?* By Dan Zadra

*The 10 Book: What's on Your Top 10 List?* By Dan Zadra

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