

PAT
(Positive Attitude Training)

Purpose: 1. Expand student understanding on the similarities and differences between sadness & depression. 2. Explore the concept and role of “choice” in the onset and development of sadness, depression and attitude. 3. Broaden student awareness of the significance depression plays in those seeking mental health services and 4. Improve student understanding how choosing to develop and practice a positive attitude creates improved mental health.

Materials: Overhead projector (preferred,) Attitude Quiz Questions and Optimism Photos (included.)
Student Materials: Paper, Pen/Pencil

Time: 25-30 Minutes.

Key Concepts/Terms: Depression, Sadness, Attitude Expressions (Pessimism/Optimism.) Examine mental illness as a condition and the role of “choosing attitude” as a way to deal with various conditions, situations and events.

Reintroduce/Introduce self: Review the last lesson (3D) and remind students that counselor’s help people learn how to adjust their perspectives on current as well as past problems that may (still) be interfering with current functioning.

Part 1

Say: Take out a sheet of paper and something to write with. We’re going to be doing a mental health activity today.

Ask: Students to:

#1. Define the word Depression without using the word Sad.

#2. Define the word Sad without using the word Depressed.

Express: It’s difficult to define those words without using one to describe the other.

Call: On volunteers to share their answers with the class.

Explain: *Depression* is a mental condition sort of like the measles, the flu or migraines are physical conditions. Think of depression as a real thing. *Sadness* on the other hand is an emotion that can go with lots of conditions including depression. Think of sadness as a real emotion. Sadness can eventually turn into a long term mood problem which over time may turn into a real depressive condition. (Explain twice=)

Announce: Depression might be the reason you feel low on energy, can't concentrate so good or remember stuff very well. Depression might have something to do with changes in your appetite and why you have sleep problems too. Sometimes depression causes your self esteem to drop a whole bunch and you may not feel as important as you used to. Depression may often make you feel angry and sad and may have something to do with not wanting to go to school/work, hang out with friends, or go have fun. Sometimes depressed people feel like not being alive or have thoughts of wanting to hurt him/her self.

State: Depression is a huge deal! Millions of people are depressed and go see counselors, psychologists, and other doctors for help with their condition. Depression might be one reason you go see a counselor some day. You might also see a Doctor for medicine to help manage symptoms of depression. Sometimes people use street drugs and alcohol to deal with their symptoms of depression but those chemicals only make depression worse.

Ask: Do people choose to be sad? Do people choose to be depressed? Raise your hand or stand up if you believe people can choose to be sad? Depressed?

Talk: About and remind students how depression is a real thing (condition) just like measles, the flu or migraines are. Sadness is sometimes more difficult to figure out but its normal emotion to feel. Sadness can just happen at various times and for lots of different reasons.

For example: Rhetorically ask if anyone *chose* to be sad when their grandma or grandpa died or if any one *chose* to be sad when they found out someone in their family had some really bad news.

Ask: Did you choose to be sad or were you just sad?

State: Depressed people often feel sad but sad people aren't always depressed. Depression isn't a choice and sadness just seems to happen. That's why it's hard to figure sadness out sometimes!

Part 2

On: Line #3, have students define the word Pessimism.

Offer: Four examples of pessimistic thinking:

~On the way to school your friend finds a 5 dollar bill and say's "I wish it would have been 20."

~With one dark cloud in the sky, your friend say's "It's probably going to rain today."

~You invite your friend to Disneyland but he/she say's "OK, but the drive is going to take forever and the lines are going to be really long!"

~ Lastly, you invite your friend to go swimming and your friend says “Well, ok but I’ll probably get really wet.”

Call: On volunteers for their definitions of the word Pessimism.

Emphasize: Words that reflect negative thinking/negative attitude.

State: Sometimes depressed people sound and feel pessimistic but that’s not what makes them depressed.

On: Line #4, have students define the word Optimism.

Offer: Four examples of optimistic thinking (use overhead if available):

~ Lloyd Christmas (Jim Carey) from the movie “Dumb & Dumber.” Explain the story behind the caption: “So, you’re telling me there’s a chance.” Essentially, Lloyd confronts a girl he has a crush on with the question “What are the chances of someone like me ending up with a girl like you?” She initially states “Not good.” Lloyd clarifies; “Not good like one in a hundred?” The lady’s response: “No, more like one in a million.” After a second or two of pause, Lloyd offers the most optimistic line in the movie.

~ Del Griffith (John Candy) from the movie “Planes, Trains and Automobiles.” Explain the story behind the caption: “We had a small fire last night but we caught it in the nick of time.” Having just been pulled over by the Highway Patrol for speeding, Del tries to explain that even though the car is basically trashed overall the car is in terrific shape!

~ Gimli (John Rhys-Davies) from the movie “Lord of the Rings.” Explain the story behind the caption: “We’re outnumbered, certainty of death, small chance for success; what are we waiting for?” This occurs when Gimli and members of the fellowship embark on an important journey that appeared to have very little chance of succeeding.

~ Sir Ernest Shackleton as himself in his real life adventure known as the Imperial Trans-Antarctic Expedition. The caption is an ad placed by Shackleton in the local newspaper looking to recruit sailors. He must have been feeling pretty optimistic that people would respond to his ad!

Call: On volunteers for their definition of the word Optimistic.

Emphasize: Words that reflect positive thinking/positive attitude.

Call: On volunteers to compare & contrast: the words Pessimism and Optimism.

Ask: How are any of these Optimistic attitudes of Lloyd, Del, Gimli or Shackleton different from your Pessimistic friend’s attitude?

State: “Pessimistic people aren’t always depressed and depressed people aren’t always pessimistic. Still, optimistic people seem to do better with depression, sadness, work, friendships and daily problems better than pessimistic people do.

Part 3

Report: That Optimism and Pessimism reflect attitude and attitude is a choice.

Have: Students prepare to take The Attitude Quiz by turning their paper over and numbering it 1-10.

State: All you have to answer is either an A or B for each question. Choose one or the other. No need to write out any of the words.

Ask:

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|-----------------------------|-----------------|----|-----------------------|
| #1. Does “Rocky Road” mean | A. Ice Cream | or | B. Difficult Journey? |
| #2. Does “Trip” mean | A. Adventure | or | B. Stumble? |
| #3. Does “Sharp” mean | A. Smart | or | B. Dangerous? |
| #4. Does “Fight” mean | A. Disagreement | or | B. Beat down? |
| #5. Does “Snap” mean | A. Easy | or | B. Break? |
| #6. Does “Trick” mean | A. Magic | or | B. Deception? |
| #7. Does “Change” mean | A. Coins | or | B. Different? |
| #8. Does “Half” mean | A. Part Full | or | B. Part Empty? |
| #9. Does “Consequence” mean | A. Good | or | B. Bad? |
| #10. Does “Death” mean | A. Beginning | or | B. End? |

Ask: Students to total the number of A’s on their papers.

Ask: Students to stand (and then sit down again) as you request the following:
“Stand if the most number of A’s you have on your paper is 1.

Repeat: Request substituting 1 with 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9 and 10.

Ask: Students to raise their hand if they wanted to write both A and B for any of the questions.

Make: Comments regarding that events in life often happen without our choice. Still, it's our choice to choose our attitude towards the stuff life gives us including divorce, rocky roads, moving, change, not making a team, having depression, illness or death.

Remind: Students they have a choice in choosing their attitude; positive, negative or both. Like anything else, the more you work at something the better you get at it. Attitude is something that is worked on everyday whether you realize it or not. Set your mind to having a positive attitude and work at it. You're going to need it in times of change! Don't wait until things get too difficult or tough before you start developing a positive attitude. Optimism does not prevent depression, measles, the flu or migraines and it is not a cure for any of those things. However, optimistic people tend to do much better with depression, measles, the flu, migraines and in their friendships, at school, at work and at home than pessimistic people do.

Restate: Counselors help people not only with depression and sadness but also with developing positive attitudes!

Ask: Students to share a time when they chose to be optimistic when they easily could have been pessimistic.

Finish: With the Christmas story. Place the Christmas story on the overhead and or read aloud.

Optimism: The power of practicing positive thinking in daily & difficult situations.



"So, you're telling me there's a chance."



*"We had a small fire last night
but we caught it in the
nick of time."*



"We're outnumbered, certainty
of death, small chance for success;
What are we waiting for?"



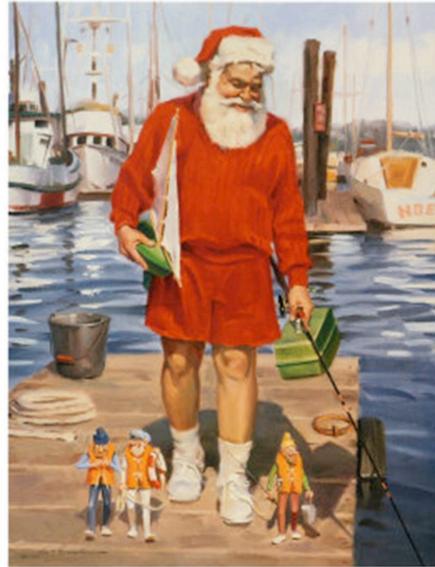
THE LEADER

Photograph by P. J. O'Connell



A Christmas Story

It's Christmas Eve and eight year old twin boys are sleeping in their bunk beds upstairs. The boy in the lower bunk hears a noise downstairs and quietly leaves his room tiptoeing halfway down the stairs. He sits quietly for a moment as he watches his father eating the cookies and drinking the milk they'd left out for Santa. The Dad, hearing the sound of someone crying, turns and sees his son standing there. Pointing frantically at his dad, the boy yells out "You lied to me, you told me there was a Santa Claus!"



MOTY MURPHY
By Tom Kromer

Later that night after the dad had gotten his son calmed down and back to bed, he went back to putting together the bike he'd started on earlier. As he reached for another bite of cookie and drink of milk, he heard yet another sound on the stairs. Reluctantly, he slowly turned to find his *other* son standing near the bottom of the stairs with his eyes wide opened and speechless. Dad, fearing the worst, quickly gathered his thoughts to "explain" the situation. However, before he could say or do anything, the boy, who was now pointing frantically at him began yelling... "My Dad is Santa Claus! My Dad is Santa Claus!"