



Nurturing Joy: Emotional Health 101

This lesson focuses on the important concerns of depression and suicide among youth.

ENHANCER OF JOY

Depression

DURATION

60 minutes

LESSON DEVELOPED BY

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TIPS TO PREPARE

Prior to this session, the expectation is that all leaders will have completed the *Break Free from Depression* Train the Trainer program. This curriculum can be found at the following website:

<https://www.openpediatrics.org/course/break-free-depression>.

MATERIALS CHECKLIST

- Bible
- Pen/Paper
- Whiteboard
- Handout: Task List

SETTING THE ATMOSPHERE

Leaders should be seated in a way that allows them to see each other. One suggestion is to have leaders sit in a circle. You can also allow leaders to sit at tables that are shaped as an

oval or horseshoe.

SCRIPTURE FOCUS

Romans 15:13 - *May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.*

Purpose

Youth ministers receive little formal training around adolescent mental health problems, including depression and suicidality. However, having some foundational information can be helpful when addressing these topics with youth. Before facilitating any sessions with your youth groups, we strongly recommend that you participate in the *Break Free from Depression Train the Trainer* online program. The program will prepare you to facilitate the *Break Free from Depression* youth curriculum with your youth group as well as respond to concerns related to depression and suicide. The purpose of this session is to help leaders understand the nature of depression and discover concrete resources to use in order to respond to depression.

Objectives

In this session, leaders will discuss plans and strategies for introducing the *Break Free from Depression* curriculum to their youth and identify community resources and referrals.

Introduction for Leaders

Planning Task List

- Who will schedule the curriculum sessions for young people?
 - Who will ensure that all needed materials are available?
 - Who will communicate with parents the content of the curriculum and encourage them to communicate with you about any questions they might have?
 - Who will be responsible for collecting the referral slips during each session?
 - Who will be in charge of following up with any needed referrals?
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Gather

Gather (5 minutes)

Prayer and Greeting

- Ask leaders to think about a young person they know who is struggling with depression. Invite them to say a silent prayer for that young person.
 - Tell them to keep that young person in mind as they go through this session.
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Engage

Engage (30 minutes)

Introduction of Session

- Thank you for taking the time to participate in this important meeting today. As part of our efforts to better address depression and suicidality for our youth, you have all completed the train the trainer session for the *Break Free from Depression* (BFFD) curriculum.
- There are three goals for today's meetings. First, we will reflect on the program, share impressions, and address any questions you might have.
- Second, we will design the schedule for using the BFFD curriculum with our youth group.
- Finally, we will assign tasks for each person and plan for our next meeting.

Activity 1: Exploring Depression through Guided Discussion

- Tell leaders that you want to invite them to explore what they engaged in the Break Free from Depression curriculum that is available for free online.
- Invite them into discussion by raising the questions below:

1. What did you think about the program?
2. Do you think the material covered is relevant for our youth?
3. Are there any topics that were not covered in the program that we will need to address?
4. How comfortable do you feel using this curriculum with your youth group?

Activity 2: Youth Curriculum Development

- Tell leaders that you want to invite them into a process of planning how they will implement a curriculum on depression into their youth ministry.
- As they think about *when* to do the curriculum, tell them they should not begin the program immediately before a long vacation or holiday break.
- Encourage them to conduct the sessions in close proximity to each other (e.g., a week apart).
- Tell them they must ensure sufficient time for the viewing of the documentary and debriefing with the youth group members.
- Please review the attached task list. Invite individuals or teams of people to sign up to complete one of the tasks. If possible, find a mental health provider to volunteer to co-facilitate the sessions

Activity 3: Community Resource Mapping

- Invite leaders to take a few minutes to think about the resources already available in the community to help with implementing the curriculum. Invite leaders to get in small groups to respond to the questions:

1. What other supports, if any, do you need to use this curriculum with your youth group?"
 2. If other supports are needed, where can we find them? (For example, is there a mental health provider in the community that might like to co-facilitate this curriculum with you? Alternatively, are there any mental health providers in the congregation that might volunteer to be present with you during the curriculum presentation?)
 3. Come up with a list of people to contact.
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Reflect

Reflect (10 minutes)

Activity 4: Naming Fears and Concerns

- Before closing, take an opportunity to reflect and name specific concerns leaders might have about implementing this curriculum on depression.
 - Also, invite leaders to share one hope they have for how this curriculum might impact their youth.
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Send Forth

Send Forth:

Activity 5: Praying Hope-filled Prayers

- After everyone shares, end by saying a prayer that acknowledges the fears and hopes that leaders have regarding implementing the curriculum in their youth ministry context.