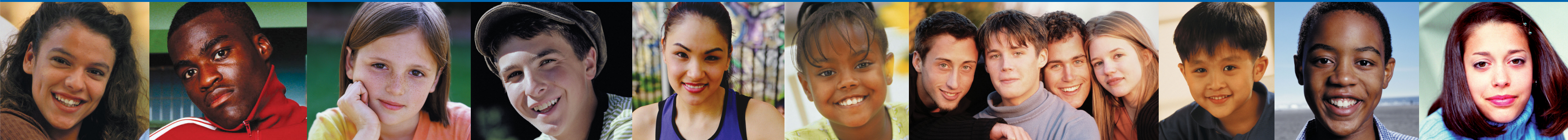


**de·spair** (dĭ spâr')

To feel there is no hope at all; to be overcome by a feeling of futility or defeat; to lose hope.

# Behind the Mask



## Behind the Mask

The American Psychological Association reports that anxiety levels among teens have increased by more than 30 percent. Most teens hide their feelings of anxiety and despair from their parents, teachers and friends, and they never get the help they need. *Behind the Mask* explores the lives of these troubled teens and their battle with anxiety and depression.

This special program was produced by the highly skilled television and education team at CWK Network, Inc.

## RESOURCE GUIDE



Connect with Kids

- Anxiety Fact Sheet
- Parent Tip Sheet
- Grades 3-5 Lesson Plan
- Grades 6-8 Lesson Plan
- Grades 9-12 Lesson Plan
- Discussion Questions

**CWKNetwork**  
Connect with kids.

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www.cwknetwork.com

# Character Traits

All *Connect with Kids* programs address these 26 character traits:

- |                   |                 |
|-------------------|-----------------|
| Caring/Compassion | Citizenship     |
| Civility          | Conviction      |
| Cooperation       | Courage         |
| Courtesy          | Diligence       |
| Freedom           | Generosity      |
| Helpfulness       | Honesty         |
| Honor             | Integrity       |
| Justice/Fairness  | Kindness        |
| Loyalty           | Patience        |
| Peace             | Perseverance    |
| Respect           | Responsibility  |
| Self-Control      | Togetherness    |
| Tolerance         | Trustworthiness |



**Connect with Kids**

# For more information



**Connect with Kids**

on *Connect with Kids* or *Behind the Mask*, please call (888) 598-KIDS or email to [sales@cwknetwork.com](mailto:sales@cwknetwork.com)



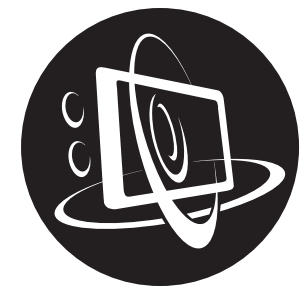
Connect with Kids

# Behind the Mask

The American Psychological Association reports that anxiety levels among teens have increased by more than 30 percent. Most teens hide their feelings of anxiety and despair from their parents, teachers and friends, and they never get the help they need. *Behind the Mask* explores the lives of these troubled teens and their battle with anxiety and depression.

**This resource guide is designed to accompany the video entitled *Behind the Mask*. This resource guide includes:**

- Anxiety Fact Sheet
- Parent Tip Sheet
- Grades 3-5 Lesson Plan
- *Making Room* Worksheet
- Grades 6-8 Lesson Plan
- *Making the News* Worksheet
- Grades 9-12 Lesson Plan
- *A Real Downer* Worksheet
- Discussion Questions



Connect with Kids



Connect with Kids

# Behind the Mask

## Discussion Questions

**Students, educators and families can discuss depression after viewing the show. Use these questions as a guide.**

1. How often do you feel “stressed out” or anxious? What kinds of situations make you feel this way?
2. Give two examples of negative ways to cope with stress. Give two examples of positive ways to cope with stress.
3. Why is it so important to learn positive ways to deal with negative stress?
4. What does depression mean to you? What is the difference between being depressed and just feeling sad?
5. What are the physical and emotional consequences of not getting help for depression?
6. How are stress, anxiety and depression related? Can you have one without the others? Explain.
7. In whom do you confide when you have a problem or when you feel very sad? How does this person help you feel better?
8. Think of a time when you felt sad or depressed. What were the circumstances? How did you cope with your feelings?
9. Does your school offer any support programs to help students or family members cope with feelings of depression? If so, describe the programs. If not, what could you and your classmates do to help depressed students in your school?
10. How can some teens become so depressed that they consider suicide as an option?



Connect with Kids

# Behind the Mask

## Anxiety Fact Sheet

The following statistics relate to anxiety and depression issues today:

- A study by the American Psychological Association shows that children are 30 to 40 percent more anxious now than their counterparts half a century earlier.
- The U.S. Surgeon Generals' Office reports that approximately 13 percent of children between the ages of 9 and 17 suffer from some type of anxiety-related disorder.
- The Center for the Advancement of Children's Mental Health, anxiety disorders are the most common mental disorders in the United States, affecting as many as one out of every 10 children and adolescents.
- Children who suffer severe anxiety may worry about things before they happen, constantly be concerned about school performance or friends, experience repetitive thoughts or actions (obsessions), have low self-esteem, and experience fears of embarrassment or making mistakes.
- According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, stress is the body's response to any demand or pressure. Unrelieved stress can result in anxiety or depression, high blood pressure and even heart disease.
- The National Parent Information Network says that young children in particular may become stressed due to changes in daily routine, the move to a new home or the birth of a sibling.
- A 2000 MetroWest Community Health Care Foundation survey, which examined depression and stress among Natick High School and Natick Middle School students, found that 70 percent of middle school students and 72 percent of high school students said their lives were stressful and many often or always worry about social issues related to school. Of those students, just 47 percent of middle school students and 41 percent of high school students reported having been taught how to manage stress.
- According to Johns Hopkins University, children under stress who have experienced loss or who suffer attention, learning or conduct disorders are more susceptible to depression.
- The National Institute of Mental Health estimates that 8 percent of adolescents and 2 percent of children suffer symptoms of depression – and most of those nearly 3 million adolescents never receive the medical treatment they need to get well.
- Depression appears to be related to a chemical imbalance in the brain that makes it hard for the cells to communicate with one another. It is NOT caused by personal weakness, laziness or lack of willpower.
- Once a child experiences an episode of depression, he/she is at risk of having another episode within the next five years.
- The National Mental Health Association says that as many as one-in-five teens suffers from clinical depression – and girls are more likely than boys to develop depression.
- A study conducted by the Institute for Social and Behavioral Research at Iowa State University found that U.S. fifth-graders who experience discrimination are much more likely to suffer symptoms of depression than those who have not experienced discrimination. In fact, of the children surveyed, 32 percent said they felt "sad or depressed," 33 percent reported "thoughts of death" and 41 percent said they felt "grouchy or irritable," which are often symptoms of depression.
- A study in *Diabetes Care* found that diabetics are three times as likely to suffer depression. In





# Behind the Mask

## Anxiety Fact Sheet (cont.)

fact, children with diabetes, as well as children under stress due to experiencing a loss or suffering from other disorders, are at a higher risk for depression.

- The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration says that depression affects 4 percent of all teens, with girls twice as likely to attempt suicide.
- Suicide is the third leading cause of death for 15- to 24-year-olds and the sixth leading cause of death for 5- to 14-year-olds. Each year, an estimated 5,000 young people between the ages of 15 and 24 commit suicide. The rate has tripled since 1960.
- The University of Minnesota Extension Service suggests remembering the acronym CLUES to help a troubled person:
  - a. Connect – Make contact. Reach out and talk to him or her. Notice his or her pain.
  - b. Listen – Take the time and really pay attention. You don't have to have all of the answers. Just listen.
  - c. Understand – Nod, pay attention and let the person know you appreciate what he or she is going through.
  - d. Express Concern – Say that you care, you are worried and you want to be helpful.
  - e. Seek Help – Tell the person you want to go with him or her to talk to a third person, preferably an adult with experience and the ability to help. Don't agree to be secretive. Enlarge the circle of support.

### RESOURCES

- American Academy of Child & Adolescent Psychiatry*
- American Academy of Family Physicians*
- American Psychological Association*
- Center for the Advancement of Children's Mental Health*
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention*
- Diabetes Care*
- Institute for Social and Behavioral Research*
- Johns Hopkins University*
- MetroWest Community Health Care Foundation*
- National Institute of Mental Health*
- National Mental Health Association*
- National Parent Information Network*
- Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration*
- University of Minnesota Extension Service*
- U.S. Surgeon Generals' Office*



## A Real Downer

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

**How many students in your school experience feelings of anxiety?  
What coping techniques did they use to deal with their feelings?**

**Directions:** Your class will conduct a scientific investigation to learn this information. You will need to follow the steps listed below and design a class survey to help you learn the answers to the questions above.

Use the following statistics to formulate your hypothesis:

- A study by the American Psychological Association shows that children are 30 to 40 percent more anxious now than their counterparts half a century earlier.
- The U.S. Surgeon Generals' Office reports that approximately 13 percent of children between the ages of 9 and 17 suffer from some type of anxiety-related disorder.

### STEPS TO A SCIENTIFIC INVESTIGATION:

#### Form a hypothesis:

About how many students at your school do you think experience feelings of anxiety? \_\_\_\_\_

What is the basis for your hypothesis? \_\_\_\_\_

How do you think these students cope with their feelings? \_\_\_\_\_

#### Design and execute the investigation:

How will you carry out your survey? \_\_\_\_\_

#### Interpret the data:

What are the raw numbers from your investigation? \_\_\_\_\_

#### Synthesize the information into an explanation:

What do the numbers mean? Compare them to your hypothesis. \_\_\_\_\_

#### Propose an alternative explanation for observation:

If your hypothesis doesn't match your explanation, explain why a difference in the numbers might exist. \_\_\_\_\_

#### Critique explanations and procedures:

Looking back, what would you have done differently? \_\_\_\_\_



Connect with Kids

# Behind the Mask

## Grades 9-12 Lesson Plan

### A Real Downer *(cont.)*

8. Finally, allow your students to share their answers and discuss the following questions:
  - What are some of the symptoms of anxiety?
  - What are some ways in which your peers cope with anxiety?
  - If they needed professional help, whom would you advise them to see?
9. Based on their findings, your students should conclude that many more of their peers experience some form of anxiety than they realized. Use this reality as a springboard for students to create a self-help brochure for children and teens to recognize the symptoms of anxiety in their peers and to identify help services available. Give your students creative license as to the format of their brochures.
10. On the day you specify, have your students share their brochures with the class.

For the  
Classroom



Connect with Kids

# Behind the Mask

## Parent Tip Sheet

The National Institute of Mental Health estimates that 8 percent of adolescents and 2 percent of children (some as young as four years old) suffer symptoms of depression. Most of those nearly 3 million adolescents never get help for their depression, with only one-in-five receiving the medical treatment they so desperately need.

All teens experience ups and downs. Every day poses a new test of their emotional stability – fighting with a friend, feeling peer pressure to “fit in” with a particular crowd or experiencing anxiety over a failed quiz – all of which can lead to normal feelings of sadness or grief. These feelings are usually brief and subside with time, unlike depression, which is more than feeling blue, sad or down in the dumps once in a while.

According to the Nemours Foundation, depression is a strong mood involving sadness, discouragement, despair or hopelessness that lasts for weeks, months or even longer. It also interferes with a person’s ability to participate in his/her normal activities.

Often, depression in teens is overlooked because parents and teachers feel that unhappiness or “moodiness” is typical in young people. They blame hormones or other factors for teens’ feelings of sadness or grief, which leaves many teens undiagnosed and untreated for their illness.

### WHAT YOU CAN DO

The Mayo Clinic reports that sometimes a stressful life event triggers depression. Other times, it seems to occur spontaneously, with no identifiable specific cause.

However, certain risk factors may be associated with developing the disorder. Johns Hopkins University cites the following risk factors for

becoming depressed:

- Children under stress who have experienced loss or who suffer from attention, learning or conduct disorders are more susceptible to depression.
- Girls are more likely than boys to develop depression.
- Youth, particularly younger children, who develop depression are likely to have a family history of the disorder.

If you suspect that your teen is clinically depressed, it is important to evaluate his/her symptoms and signs as soon as possible. The National Depressive and Manic-Depressive Association cites the following warning signs indicating that your teen may suffer from depression:

- Prolonged sadness or unexplained crying spells
- Significant changes in appetite and sleep patterns
- Irritability, anger, worry, agitation or anxiety
- Pessimism or indifference
- Loss of energy or persistent lethargy
- Feelings of guilt and worthlessness
- Inability to concentrate
- Indecisiveness
- Inability to take pleasure in former interests
- Social withdrawal
- Unexplained aches and pains
- Recurring thoughts about death or suicide

One strategy for helping your anxious or depressed child is to discuss your concerns with him/her. Having this conversation can be extremely difficult,



Connect with Kids

# Behind the Mask

## Parent Tip Sheet (cont.)

especially as children grow older, but it is never too late to open the lines of communication.

Experts say all children, even teenagers, want to talk about and discuss their feelings with their parents, but children are unlikely to initiate this conversation. The Mental Health Association of Westchester suggests the following guidelines for talking to your child about his/her emotional problems:

- Begin early. Show your child that you are willing to talk about difficult and awkward subjects. If you are unsure how to respond when your child asks a question, it is okay to say the subject is important enough to discuss when you can pay attention to it and that you will discuss it later ... but be sure you do. Otherwise, the message is that your child's concern was not important enough for you to remember and discuss.
- Keep the conversation at your child's level. When your child asks questions, you may overestimate how much he/she actually understands. Ask what his/her ideas are and what he/she has heard. Fit your answers to your child's level of understanding. Provide as much information as he/she needs to satisfy him/her. Follow your child's cues as to when he/she has had enough discussion.
- Be honest. Your child can accept ideas told to him/her honestly and straightforwardly at his/her own level of understanding. Be honest in order to develop credibility with your child. Of course, it is all right to acknowledge that a topic is difficult, sad or awkward for you to discuss with your child.
- Start the conversation. If you feel that something should be discussed, feel free to raise it. Your child may be reluctant to talk about his/her own experiences or ideas, especially during the teen years. A natural lead-in may come from

discussing a television show that you have watched together, listening to lyrics written by your child's favorite musician or following a classroom discussion.

- Listen instead of lecturing. The best way to encourage conversation is to really listen and hear what your child says. If you anticipate what he/she will say, finish his/her sentences or use the time as an opportunity to lecture, chances are you will close off discussion. Expect that you will disagree about some issues, but try to listen to your child's point of view.
- Really listen. Of course, sometimes you will be talking while doing something else. Sometimes that helps to reduce the intensity of a discussion and is useful as long as you are not too distracted from listening. But at other times, your child may feel that his/her concerns and interests are not taken seriously enough. Be sure to spend time when your child is the main focus. These times often lead to good discussions.
- Be available. Children want adults to be available when they are inclined to talk. The more you are available, for example, by spending after-school or evening hours in a common area of your home, the greater the likelihood that your child will seek you out for a conversation.

It is important to acknowledge that teens may choose to experiment with drugs or alcohol or become sexually promiscuous to avoid feelings of depression. According to the National Mental Health Association, teens may also express their depression through other hostile, aggressive and risk-taking behaviors. These behaviors will only lead to new problems, deeper levels of depression and destroyed relationships with friends, family, law enforcement or school officials.

*(continued on next page)*



Connect with Kids

# Behind the Mask

## Grades 9-12 Lesson Plan

### A Real Downer

#### OBJECTIVES

Students will be able to ...

- Form a hypothesis about the number of students in their school coping with anxiety and depression.
- Conduct a scientific investigation by surveying students to determine the number of students in their school coping with anxiety and depression.
- Compile and analyze data to draw a conclusion comparing their hypotheses to the actual numbers.
- Create a self-help brochure to promote awareness of anxiety symptoms.

#### MATERIALS

- Pens, pencils
- Paper
- Research tools (Internet, magazines, newspapers, etc.)
- Art supplies
- *A Real Downer* worksheet

#### PROCEDURE

1. Begin a discussion about anxiety by asking your students the following questions:
  - What is anxiety?
  - What are some common causes of anxiety?
  - About how many teens in your school feel suffer from anxious feelings or worried thoughts?
  - How could you find out the exact number of students who feel this way?
2. Explain to your students that they will conduct a scientific investigation by surveying students to determine how many students in their school suffer symptoms of anxiety. As part of their research, students will determine how their peers cope with their feelings of anxiety.
3. Distribute one copy of the *A Real Downer* worksheet to each student, and use it to review as a class the basic steps involved in a scientific investigation.
4. Allow your students to use the information at the top of the worksheet to develop hypotheses. You will need to tell them the number of students in the school, but allow them to do the rest of the investigation on their own. Instruct each student to record both a hypothesis and the basis for it on their *A Real Downer* worksheets.
5. As a class, generate a list of questions for your class survey. You will need to make copies of the survey questions to give each student.
6. Allow time for your students to complete the investigation and then instruct them to come together to compile their results.
 

*NOTE:* When students compile their results, you may need to point out that they only surveyed a sample of the school and they should adjust their results accordingly.
7. The class may interpret the results as a whole, but each student should work individually to complete the remaining portion of the *A Real Downer* worksheet.

*(continued on next page)*





Connect with Kids

## For the Classroom

# Behind the Mask

## Parent Tip Sheet (cont.)

The development of newer antidepressant medications and mood-stabilizing drugs in the last 20 years has revolutionized the treatment of depression. According to the Mayo Clinic, medication can relieve the symptoms of depression, and it has become the first line of treatment for most types of the disorder.

Psychotherapy may also help teens cope with ongoing problems that trigger or contribute to their depression. A combination of medications and a brief course of psychotherapy are usually effective if a teen suffers from mild to moderate depression. For severely depressed teens, initial treatment usually includes medications. Once they improve, psychotherapy can be more effective.

Immediate treatment of your teen's depression is crucial. Adolescents and children suffering from depression may turn to suicide if they do not receive proper treatment. The American Foundation for Suicide Prevention reports that suicide is the 11th leading cause of death in the United States. The National Association of School Psychologists suggests looking for the following warning signs that may indicate your depressed teen is contemplating suicide:

- Suicide notes – Notes or journal entries alluding to suicide are a very real sign of danger and should be taken seriously.
- Threats – Threats may be direct statements (“I want to die.” “I am going to kill myself.”) or, unfortunately, indirect comments (“The world would be better without me.” “Nobody will miss me anyway.”). Among teens, indirect clues could be offered through joking or through comments in school assignments, particularly creative writing or artwork.
- Previous attempts – If your child or teen has attempted suicide in the past, a greater

likelihood that he or she will try again exists. Be very observant of any friends who have tried suicide before.

- Depression (helplessness and hopelessness) – When symptoms of depression include strong thoughts of helplessness and hopelessness, your teen is possibly at greater risk for suicide. Watch out for behaviors or comments that indicate your teen is feeling overwhelmed by sadness or pessimistic views of his or her future.
- “Masked” depression – Sometimes risk-taking behaviors can include acts of aggression, gunplay and alcohol or substance abuse. While your teen does not act “depressed,” his or her behavior suggests that he or she is not concerned about his or her own safety.
- Final arrangements – This behavior may take many forms. In adolescents, it might be giving away prized possessions, such as jewelry, clothing, journals or pictures.
- Efforts to hurt himself or herself – Self-injury behaviors are warning signs for young children as well as teens. Common self-destructive behaviors include running into traffic, jumping from heights and scratching, cutting or marking his or her body.
- Changes in physical habits and appearance – Changes include inability to sleep or sleeping all the time, sudden weight gain or loss and disinterest in appearance or hygiene.
- Sudden changes in personality, friends or behaviors – Changes can include withdrawing from friends and family, skipping school or classes, loss of involvement in activities that were once important and avoiding friends.
- Plan/method/access – A suicidal child or adolescent may show an increased interest in guns and other weapons, may seem to have





Connect with Kids

# Behind the Mask

## Grades 6-8 Lesson Plan

### Making the News (cont.)

*NOTE:* If necessary, show examples of newsletters or discuss the components of a newsletter. Explain that students will need to write three or four small articles, collect pictures for the articles, give the newsletter a title and assign a date by which the newsletter will be published.

6. Allow time for your students to conduct their research. Consider inviting the school counselor to visit your class so that students may interview him or her and ask any necessary questions.
7. On the day you specify, have groups submit their newsletters. Consider having a contest for the newsletters by judging categories including, but not limited to, most informative, best layout, most interesting facts and most useful information. Your students, as well as teachers and faculty members, could vote on their favorites.

For the  
Classroom



Connect with Kids

# Behind the Mask

## Grades 3-5 Lesson Plan

### Making Room

#### OBJECTIVES

Students will be able to ...

- Analyze and conclude the causes of personal stress triggers.
- Identify the methods to remove, reduce or cope with personal stress triggers.
- Research the short- and long-term effects of stress.

#### MATERIALS

- Pens, pencils
- Research tools (Internet, magazines, newspapers, etc.)
- *Making Room* worksheet

#### PROCEDURE

1. Begin by asking your students to describe how stress would look if you could see it. Allow time for your students to think about their answers and share them with the class.
2. Ask your students if all stress is bad. Then, ask them to provide examples of positive stress or “eustress.” Examples: Stress can sometimes motivate us to do things we might put off doing, such as completing a report or studying for a test. Sometimes, stress comes from being excited about something good, such as a vacation or a holiday celebration.
3. Review that “eustress” is positive stress but distress is negative stress. Ask your students to share examples of things that might cause distress. Examples: other siblings, starting a new school, moving, etc.
4. Explain that for some people, distress can become a large part of their lives and eventually begin to take over some parts of their lives. Ask your students to offer some examples of the mental and physical effects of distress on a person.
5. Tell your students that if left alone, distress can take over, but they can take steps to make more room in their lives for positive feelings. One step they can take is to identify the triggers or items in their lives that cause them stress.
6. Distribute the *Making Room* worksheet. Instruct your students to list five factors in their lives that cause them to feel negative stress.
7. Next, allow time for your students to think about why these factors are a source of stress in their lives and brainstorm realistic ideas for controlling or eliminating the listed stressors. *NOTE:* You may decide to have your students complete this step and the remaining portion of the activity independently for homework.
8. Explain that the last portion of the activity requires some research. Students will research five effects of stress in a person’s life. Remind them to consider both short- and long-term effects.
9. On a day you determine, set aside class time for students to discuss their findings and conclusions with the class.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_



Connect with Kids

## Making Room

**Directions:** The goal of this activity is to minimize the negative stress in your life in order to make room for more positive feelings. Use the chart below to identify the stress triggers in your life. Then, brainstorm ideas to eliminate, reduce or cope with the stress that you experience. Finally, research at least five effects of stress in a person's life. Keep in mind that effects may be either short- or long-term. Record the effects on the lines at the bottom of the page.

Factors that really stress you out	Two reasons you think these factors cause you stress	Two ways in which you could eliminate, reduce or cope with the stress
	1. 2.	1. 2.
	1. 2.	1. 2.
	1. 2.	1. 2.
	1. 2.	1. 2.
	1. 2.	1. 2.

List five effects of stress in a person's life. Identify if it is a short- or long-term effect.

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_



Connect with Kids

## For the Classroom

# Behind the Mask

## Grades 6-8 Lesson Plan

### Making the News

#### OBJECTIVES

Students will be able to ...

- Identify the meaning of depression.
- Research the causes, symptoms and treatments of depression.
- Work with a group to compose a newsletter about depression.

#### MATERIALS

- Pens, pencils
- Paper
- Art supplies
- Research tools (Internet, magazines, newspapers, etc.)
- *Making the News* worksheet

#### PROCEDURE

1. Open this activity with a discussion about depression with your students by using the following questions as a guide.
  - Have you ever felt really sad?
  - What other words could you use to describe how you felt?
  - Have you ever felt depressed about something? How did you cope with your feelings?
  - Can you identify a difference between being sad and feeling depressed? If so, what is the difference?
  - How can you tell if a friend is depressed?
  - What can you do to help a friend if he or she were depressed?
2. Explain that everyone feels sad at sometime during his or her life. Depression, however, occurs when a person is sad for a longer time than usual and appears sadder than most people normally would be in a similar situation.
3. Continue to explain that depression is a type of illness that affects a person's thoughts and actions. Some people go through periods of depression that last only a few days while others must live with depression for several months. Also, a person may become depressed due to a variety of reasons. Conclude the explanation by informing your students that people who suffer from depression need professional help in order to get better. The problem is that many times, you do not know that a person is depressed because you do not know about depression or you are not aware of the symptoms associated with the disorder.
4. Divide students into groups of three, and distribute one copy of the *Making the News* worksheet to each group.
5. Explain to your students that they will work with two of their classmates to design and compose a newsletter about depression. The purpose of the newsletter is to inform people about depression so that if loved one suffers from the illness, family members and friends can help the person get the treatment that he or she needs.