

Home Visit Notes

Lesson: Mental Health

Objectives:

- Help parents understand how important their role is to providing a foundation for good mental health for their children.
- Reinforce good mental health concepts taught in class.
- Encourage reading in the home and model good reading skills.
- Empower parents as teachers by providing background knowledge.
- Give parents avenues for professional mental health providers if necessary
- Foster fun learning interaction between parent and child.

Activities:

1. Read books such as I Love You as Much...., Tell Me Something Happy Before I Go to Sleep, or The Wonderful Happens and leave additional books for the families to read together. Use the books as a springboard to talk about how special the child is and what makes him or her special. This also can be a way to begin a discussion on love, expressing love, hope, and looking for the positive aspects of each day. A list of age appropriate books applicable to this theme is included with this packet.
2. Make a "Positive Poms" sticker pal. These cute sticker feet fuzzies have positive messages attached.
3. Make a sun reflector. There are two different ideas included that can be made from inexpensive materials. This can lead to a discussion on how children are often a reflection of their parents. What do we want to see when we look at our kids? These qualities need to come from the parent. This can also be a starting point to discuss how our moods are affected by light as well as our surroundings. Brainstorm ways to change the environment to positively affect our moods.
4. Make your own handprint rainbow. This is a great way to make the child feel special. It also reinforces some classroom information on rainbows. Complete the "Reflecting Rainbows" activity for a fun, inexpensive lesson on rainbows.

5. Paint a flowerpot or decorate it in any way. Plant some flower seeds in winter and watch them grow. Discuss what plants need to grow. Bring a little springtime into a dreary winter day.
6. Begin a positive thought box for the child. Decorate a shoebox, oatmeal container, or coffee can with felt or paper and let the child add glitter, beads, yarn, or other items to make it special. Have the parent write down or draw pictures of what is special about the child. Add your own special thoughts. Encourage other family members to add to the collection. This should be an ongoing project with positive thoughts added often and reviewed with the child to encourage the sense of worth. *(A similar activity is included in the instructor's notes).* If the parent makes a positive thought box in class, the home visitor may want to add something positive to this box as well. If the individual is making parenting gains at home, it would be very encouraging for him or her to have this success put in writing.
7. Make a "feeling collage" with the child. Bring magazines or old books that can be cut apart. Discuss different emotions and what kind of face shows each of these. Ask the child to look through and find people expressing different emotions, cut them out and glue them on paper. Talk about the different reasons people might experience these emotions. *(This activity is also included in the instructor's notes).*
8. Part of good mental health is healthy eating. Start by reading Green Eggs and Ham By Dr. Seuss. This book is a great lead-in to several different discussions. One area could be to talk about keeping your mind open to different types of food. Another area is to talk about being open to other opinions or to use nice talk with others (unlike the example of "I do not like that Sam-I-am"). Suggestions for some healthy snacks are included to encourage parents to feed their children healthy food. This would also be a good opportunity to discuss proper nutrition and cleanliness for anyone in the house regardless of age.
9. Singing and music are great ways to lift emotions. Using music and movement can also help children learn the sounds and rhythms of the English language in an enjoyable, memorable context. Some ideas to make instruments at home are included. The lyrics to the following songs are included: *You Are My Sunshine, If You're Happy and You Know It, Mommy Loves You, The More We Get Together, and We'll All*

Join Together. Many other fun songs for kids are available. For some ideas visit www.bussongs.com.

10. To have a positive attitude takes work and what better time to start the habit of happiness than as a child? Brainstorm with the child circumstances, people, or things that make them happy. Talk about what they can do to help themselves by taking positive steps. What can they do when they are frustrated or mad? Use the "positive steps" sheet to write on it what they want to do to make them happy. Let them color or decorate the sheet and post it in their home. Older children could be encouraged to make this into a goal setting activity. *A similar activity is included in the instructor's notes.*
11. Make a "Positive Steps Foot" craft. This craft is a wonderful reinforcement of the positive steps activity. It is also a powerful parent/child bonding exercise as a reminder to the parent of how quickly a child grows.
12. Have the child make a feelings mask. Have the child draw facial features onto a paper plate to represent a feeling he or she may be experiencing. Supply the child with yarn or plastic Easter grass for hair. Glue a tongue depressor or Popsicle stick to the plate so the child can hold the mask.
13. Make an "Emotions Puppet". This can give the child an opportunity to work through their emotions and try out how to effectively deal with different situations.
14. Make a "Not-to-Worry" doll. Kids can have plenty on their minds: making mom or dad happy; an upcoming spelling test; or a big soccer game. So make these dolls to take the worries away. *(A similar activity is repeated in the Instructor Notes.)*
15. Make an "I am Special Book". This will be a positive activity for the child and a wonderful keepsake.
16. Be Your Best. Read the *Little Engine That Could* and have the child act out the role of the Little Engine. The child will acquire oral language and reading skills through repetition and through his or her attempts to interpret the moods and feelings of the story. It's also a great discussion starter for the importance of doing our best. *(See the Positive Poms activity to make a "I Think I Can" pom pom creature.)*

Positive Mental Health Family Education Books

Babies & Preschool

<u>Elmo Loves You</u>	Sarah Albee
<u>Great Day for Up</u>	Dr. Seuss
<u>Guess How Much I Love You</u>	Sam McBratney
<u>The Happy Book</u>	Diane Muldrow
<u>Hug</u>	Jez Alborough
<u>I Like Me!</u>	Nancy L. Carlson
<u>I Love You as Much...</u>	Laura Krauss Melmed
<u>I Love You With All of My Heart</u>	Noris Kern
<u>Maisy Loves You</u>	Candlewick Press Staff
<u>Snuggle Puppy</u>	Sandra Boynton
<u>Tell Me Something Happy Before I Go to Sleep</u>	Joyce Dunbar
<u>The Little Engine that Could</u>	Watty Piper
<u>Today I Feel Silly: And Other Moods that Make my Day</u>	Jamie Lee Curtis

Ages 5-10

<u>The Way I Feel</u>	Janan Cain
<u>The Affirmation Web</u>	Lori Lite
<u>Diary of a Worm</u>	Doreen Cronin
<u>Did I Ever Tell You How Lucky You Are?</u>	Dr. Seuss
<u>Hope for the Flowers</u>	Trina Paulus

Positive Mental Health Family Education Books

Ages 5-10 (continued)

I Need a Hug!

Clara Barton Elementary School

The Kissing Hand

Audrey Penn

I'm Gonna Like Me

Jamie Lee Curtis

The Lotus Seed

Sherry Garland

The Magic School Bus Gets a Bright Idea

Joanna Cole

Something Beautiful

Sharon Dennis Wyeth

Wishes For You

Tobi Tobias

The Wonderful Happens

Cynthia Rylant

What Are You so Grumpy About?

Tom Lichtenheld

Positive Steps



Positive Steps Foot

Materials:

- Play dough
- Plastic container at least 2 inches high and big enough to fit the child's foot with a little room left on the sides
- Plaster of paris
- Paint
- Big paper clip or something to hang the plaster cast
- Child's foot



Procedure:

1. Push some play dough into the bottom of your container. Make it about an inch thick. Smooth out the top. The play dough should be soft enough for the child to make an impression of his foot.
 2. Have your child make an impression in the play dough with his or her foot. You may have to press on the foot to make a better impression.
 3. Prepare the plaster according to the directions. Pour the plaster over the impression and fill about 1/2 to 3/4 of an inch. Shake the mold or tap with a knife to get out the bubbles about 10 seconds or until you don't see many bubbles.
 4. Partially unfold the paper clip. Place a paper clip in the plaster so that it is sticking out. Make sure you have it at the top of the mold so that it will hang right.
 5. Let the plaster dry and then carefully remove the mold. Take off as much play dough as you can. Let the rest dry completely and then brush it away.
 6. Paint and date your plaster cast.
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White Bread Play Dough

This recipe, made with white bread and glue, has a fine, elastic texture that won't crack even during intricate modeling projects. The dough dries out quickly, so only make what you need in one sitting.

Materials: 1 to 2 slices white bread, crusts removed and 1 Tablespoon white glue

Procedure: Rip one slice of bread into tiny pieces and drop into a large bowl. Add the glue and mix with a fork until all the bread crumbs are moistened. The mix should be pliable and somewhat sticky. If it's too wet to roll into a ball, mix in more bread pieces. Gather the dough into a ball, kneading it for a minute or two or rolling it between your palms, until it becomes elastic and satiny. If the dough begins to dry out as the child models it, he can dip his fingertips in water (have a small bowl handy.) and knead the dough until pliable. When the sculptures air-dry, about 1 to 3 days, paint with acrylics. To add a hard, semi gloss finish, mix equal parts of water and white glue and brush on several coats.

Idea from: <http://www.daniellesplace.com/html/miscellaneous.html#>

Activity # 8

Kids' Favorite Healthy Snacks

1. trail mix
2. baby carrots
3. yogurt
4. apples
5. healthy snack bars
6. bananas
7. watermelon
8. dried fruit
9. pretzels
10. triscuits or other whole grain crackers
11. whole wheat and peanut butter sandwich quarters (tiny sandwiches), or tuna, egg salad, lean meat
12. Small pieces of bagels with peanut butter or cottage cheese
13. Fruit smoothies for a real treat (yogurt, fruit, orange juice)...you'll need a blender for this one.

Activity # 13

Emotion Puppets

Children will be given the opportunity to explore their own emotions and thereby further develop self-understanding. They will also gain an awareness that not everyone reacts to the same experience in the same manner.

Materials:

- Lunch size paper bags
- Markers
- Scissors
- Glue
- Construction paper

Procedure:

1. The child decides on what type of emotion to display on his or her hand puppet.
2. To make the puppets mouth, use upper half of the fold for the upper lip and the bottom of lip is underneath the fold. This will allow the mouth to open.
3. Using other parts of the bag dress the puppet with markers and construction paper. (making eyes, nose, etc.)
4. Ask the child if the puppet fits the desired emotion.

Not-to-Worry Dolls

As Guatemalan custom has it, diminutive worry dolls remove frets and worries from sleeping children, who confide one concern to each doll before they go to bed. Our version of the worry doll is bigger than the conventional worry doll in order to make it simpler for small hands to make.

There is a legend amongst the Highland Indian villages of Guatemala: "If you have a problem, then share it with a worry doll. Before going to bed, tell one worry to each doll, then place them beneath your pillow. Whilst you sleep, the dolls will take your worries away!"

Materials:

- Chenille stems
- Yarn
- Scissors



Procedure:

1. Fold a chenille stem in half. Form a loop at the folded side (this will be the head) at the top and twist tightly several times just below the loop (this will be the body). The two sides that are left will be the legs.
2. Cut a chenille stem in half. This will be the arms of the doll. Twist tightly onto the body.
3. Now start wrapping the yarn around the chenille to form clothes. As you wrap, don't go complete to the end of the tie or the yarn will slide off. Leave a little at the end for hands and feet. Wrap the yarn down one leg and back up it. Then down and up the other leg. You will have to make several wraps up and down the torso to make it thick enough.
4. Choose another color yarn for the upper body. Wrap the arms going out one arm and back. Then out the other arm and back.
5. Wrap some yarn around your hand and tie off in the middle. Cut the ends. This is the hair, tie it on the head. Another way to do the hair is to cut short lengths of yarn and tie each piece individually to the head.

Alternative for younger children: Cut out the doll pattern and have the child decorate it with markers, construction paper, etc. Glue on yarn for hair. The child could have the hair standing straight out as if the doll were "stressed". The child tells a worry to the doll before going to bed and then puts it under his or her pillow.

Musical Bottles

Materials:

- Water or soda bottles (20 oz)
- Rice or noodles
- Glitter or Sequins
- Tape or Glue
- Ribbon
- Stickers (optional)

Procedure:

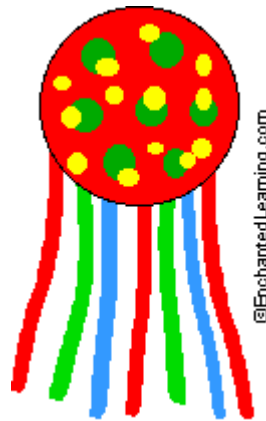
1. Fill a clean, dry bottle 1/4 - 1/2 full with noodles or rice. Add glitter, sequins, and or paper punches to add color.
2. Tape (or glue) the lid on and then tie a ribbon around the neck of the bottle.
3. Decorate the outside of the bottle with stickers if desired.
4. Turn on the music, dance, and make lots of wonderful noise!

Paper Plate Maracas

A maraca is a Latin American and Tupi rattle. The original maracas were made from hollow gourds filled with pebbles or seeds.

Materials:

- Two paper plates
- Dried beans, rice, or popcorn
- Stapler
- Paint, markers, or crayons
- Crepe paper streamers



Procedure:

1. Decorate the outside of both plates using crayons, markers, crayons, and or stickers.
2. Staple crepe paper streamers to the inside of one of the plates.
3. Add dried beans, rice or unpopped popcorn to the plate.
4. Cover with the other plate and staple around the edges so that the beans don't fall out.
5. These are fun because you can make a lot of noise!

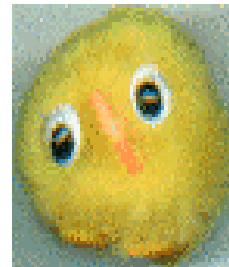
Activity # 2

Positive Poms

These cute fuzzy critters will surely brighten anyone's day. They can be given as a special surprise or kept for inspiration. The children will want to make more than one!

Materials:

- Assorted color pom poms (1 inch)
- Glue
- Foam board with sticker back
- Scissors
- Google eyes (3/8")
- Chenille stems
- Craft ribbon (1/4")
- Heart template
- Permanent marker (ultra-fine point)
- Scraps of felt or small pom poms for nose



Procedure:

1. Cut a heart (template) out of the foam board.
2. Cut a chenille stem into fourths. Cut one of the quarters into half for the antenna. Glue to the top of the pom pom.
3. Glue eyes to the pom pom.
4. Add a nose if desired.
5. Write an encouraging word or phrase on the ribbon and glue to the heart. (i.e. Awesome, I am Special, or I Think I Can)
6. Glue the pom pom on top of the edge of the ribbon.
7. Display in a prominent place.

neurons	you're special	communicate
take time for yourself	glass is ½ empty	be yourself
support system	stress management	smile
counselor	random acts of kindness	connections
dreams	stress	depression
count your blessings	relax	laugh
psychiatrist	glass is ½ full	mood

Mental Wellness Bingo - Word List

anxiety	friends	follow your heart
help	lighthearted	journaling
the blues	content	negative people
love life	bipolar	

dementia	share	sanity
uniqueness	happy	joy
chill out	music	peace
goals	laugh	healthy lifestyles
action	mental wellness	enjoy life
humor	psychiatric drugs	expectations

Reflecting Rainbows

Materials:

- Compact disc (CD)
- A bright flashlight and a room that you can make dark
- Piece of white paper



What do I do?

1 Take the CD out of its case and take a look at the blank side (the side that doesn't have any printing on it). You'll see bands of shimmering color. Tilt the CD back and forth and the colors will shift and change.

2 Turn out the lights and shine your flashlight at the CD. Hold your piece of white paper so that the light reflecting off the CD shines onto the paper. The reflected light will make fabulous rainbow colors on your paper.

3 Tip the CD and see how that changes the reflections. Change the distance from the CD to the paper. What happens to the colors?

4 Take a close look at your CD. It's made of aluminum coated with plastic. The colors that you see on the CD are created by white light reflecting from ridges in the metal.

Why does a CD reflect rainbow colors?

Like water drops in falling rain, the CD separates white light into all the colors that make it up. The colors you see reflecting from a CD are interference colors, like the shifting colors you see on a soap bubble or an oil slick.

You can think of light as being made up of waves-like the waves in the ocean. When light waves reflect off the ridges on your CD, they overlap and interfere with each other. Sometimes the waves add together, making certain colors brighter, and sometimes they cancel each other, taking certain colors away.