

ROOTED TOGETHER

IOWA STUDENTS FOR TOBACCO EDUCATION & PREVENTION

Get involved

Mental health is like a garden - when cared for, it grows and thrives. Promote healthy mental health habits through a hands-on activity that encourages youth to support themselves as well as one another.

Directions

This activity can be led by youth chapter members in a classroom, during open hours in the cafeteria or even during a scheduled home sports event.

Kickoff Discussion

Begin with a group conversation. Ask: “What does mental health mean to you?” Discuss the idea that like plants, our minds need sunlight, water, care and support to thrive. Introduce the metaphor: mental health is like a garden — when we care for it, it grows and thrives.

Decorate a flowerpot

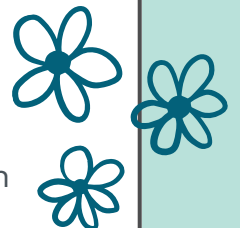
Give each person a flowerpot. Let them decorate it to represent their personality, feelings or with positive affirmations (I am enough, growth takes time, I’m blooming into who I’m meant to be, etc.). Encourage creative expression — this is part of the therapeutic experience!

Plant seeds

Each person adds soil into their flowerpots then plants seeds. Everyone gets their own packet of seeds, but will only need a few for this project.

Support growth

Each person gets two plant labels to write personal ways to support their own mental health. Write one item per each plant label then stick it in the pot (Take 10-minute breaks, talk to a friend, limit screen time, etc.).



Care Cards - Take 1 Leave 1

- Each person grabs a sticky note to create a Care Card - a small, meaningful action that someone else can do to support and spread kindness to a friend or peer. Examples:
 - Give someone a genuine compliment today.
 - Check in with a friend you haven't talked to in a while.
 - Write down three things you're grateful for.
 - Share something that helped you during a tough time.
 - Invite someone to join you at lunch today.
- Post your Care Card on a *Take 1 Leave 1* display — a bulletin board, hallway wall or designated space in a classroom.
- Take one Care Card left by someone else for you to do that day.
- Complete the action and feel the positive impact!
- Keep the Cycle Going! For every Care Card you take, leave one in return. Come back as often as you like to keep growing kindness!

Group Reflection

Wrap up with a group reflection. Ask questions like: What helps you bloom? Who is part of your support system? How can we be better supporters for each other within our ISTEP Chapter?

Resources

My Life, My Quit: Text “start my quit” to 36072 for free confidential help quitting all forms of tobacco and nicotine, including vaping. Live chat, and more information, is available at: mylifemyquit.com

Your Life Iowa: When you don't know who to turn to, Your Life Iowa is here for you 24/7. Whether its alcohol, drugs, gambling, mental health, suicidal thoughts, or something else. No judgement. Just help. Call (855)581-8111, text (855)895-8398 or live chat (yourlifeiowa.org).

988: At the 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline, we understand that life's challenges can sometimes be difficult. Our caring counselors are here for you. You aren't alone. Call or text 988, or live chat (988lifeline.org).

Materials

Sticky notes, craft materials, flowerpots, compressed potting soil, seeds and plant labels.



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Health and Human Services