Girl Scouts
MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS
Patch Program
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Millions of Americans are affected by mental health conditions every year. Mental illness is a brain disorder, which is a medical condition just like other physical illness. There is no simple test that can let someone know if there is mental illness and these can begin to develop at any age, some as early as a child in elementary school. If a friend or family member is showing signs of mental illness, reach out to a trusted adult, to help that person get help. Learning all about mental health and mental illness is an important first step.

The Mental Health Awareness Patch addresses the following learning objectives:

1. Girls Scouts will define the difference between mental health and mental illness.
2. Girl Scouts will examine the brain and its influence on thoughts, feelings, and behavior associated with mental illness.
3. Girls Scouts will describe common signs, treatment, and ways to live well in recovery for a variety of mental health conditions.
4. Girl Scouts will identify their role in promoting mental health awareness and reducing the stigma.
5. Girl Scouts will explore local, state, and national resources that help people living with mental illness and their families.

The Mental Health Awareness Patch was initially created by International Bipolar Foundation (IBPF). IBPF is a nonprofit based in San Diego that was founded by parents of children with bipolar disorder. Their mission is to improve understanding and treatment of bipolar disorder through research; to promote care and support services for individuals and caregivers; and to erase stigma through education. This learning packet has been adapted by National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) Fox Valley in collaboration with the Girls Scout of the Northwestern Great Lakes in support from the Women’s Fund of the Fox Valley Region.

Daisies, Brownies, Juniors, Cadettes, and Seniors/Ambassadors can earn the patch. The patch was originally designed for the Girl Scouts of the United States of America and is also available to other similar organizations such as Girl Guides. Once earned, the patch is provided for free by IBPF. To request patches, fill out the survey at www.gsnw.gl/MHAPatch. You will need the following information:

1. The dates you started and ended the program.
2. Your contact information, including troop number and service area.
3. Where you heard about the patch program.
4. Descriptions of the activities you completed with your troop.

Patches will be mailed directly to the address submitted on the survey.
MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS PATCH CRITERIA

All age levels are required to complete the following sections and activities:

- **Section 1**: Define the difference between mental health versus mental illness.
- **Section 2**: Learn about the brain and its role on thoughts, feelings and behaviors with mental illness.
- Complete the Mental Health Facts and Myths Pre- and Post-Quizzes.
- Reflect with your group upon completing all the activities.

Each age level will also be required to complete the following:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Daisies and Brownies</th>
<th>Juniors and Cadettes</th>
<th>Seniors and Ambassadors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Complete one <strong>Discover</strong> learning activity from Section 3, 4, or 5</td>
<td>Complete one <strong>Discover</strong> learning activity from Section 3, 4, or 5</td>
<td>Complete two <strong>Discover</strong> learning activities from Section 3, 4, or 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Complete one <strong>Take Action</strong> learning activity from Section 3, 4, or 5</td>
<td>Complete one <strong>Connect</strong> learning activity from Section 3, 4, or 5</td>
<td>Complete two <strong>Connect</strong> learning activities from Section 3, 4, or 5</td>
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<td>Complete two <strong>Take Action</strong> learning activities from Section 3, 4, or 5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Girls Scout performance will be successful when:

- You define the difference between mental health and mental illness.
- You examine the brain and describe its influence on thoughts, feelings, and behavior associated with mental illness.
- You describe common signs, treatment, and ways to live well in recovery for a variety of mental health conditions.
- You identify a role in promoting mental health awareness and reducing the stigma.
- You explore local, state, and national resources that help people living with mental illness and their families.
What is the difference between mental health and mental illness?

All age levels are required to complete this section.

**Description:**

The phrases “mental health” and “mental illness” are increasingly being used as if they mean the same thing, but they do not. Everyone has mental health, and as the World Health Organization famously says, “There is no health without mental health.” In the course of a lifetime, not all people will experience a mental illness, but everyone will struggle or have a challenge with their mental well-being (i.e., their mental health) just like we all have challenges with our physical well-being from time to time.

When we talk about mental health, we’re talking about our mental well-being: our emotions, our thoughts and feelings, our ability to solve problems and overcome difficulties, our social connections, and our understanding of the world around us.

A mental illness is a medical condition; it is a brain disorder that affects that way people think, feel, behave, or interact with others. There are many different kinds of mental illnesses, and they have different signs and symptoms that impact peoples’ lives in different ways.

**Resource:** Here to help Mental Health and Substance Abuse Information You can Trust
http://www.heretohelp.bc.ca/ask-us/whats-the-difference-between-mental-health-and-mental-illness

**Learning Objective:**

Girls Scouts will define the difference between mental health and mental illness.

**Learning Activities:**

**Discover:**

Explore the following resources and discuss what you learned about mental health and mental illness.

1. Complete the Mental Illness Facts and Myths Pre-Quiz. After completing all required sections for the patch, retake the quiz and compare your answers.

2. Review the Walk In Our shoes website to define and compare mental health and mental illness. What is a mental illness? What kind of people get mental illness and what are warning signs? What does it mean to get diagnosed? http://walkinourshoes.org/what-is-mental-health

3. What does it mean to have mental Illness? Approximately one in five people will have a mental illness in his/her lifetime. Explore the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) web site https://www.nami.org/ and review the following article https://www.nami.org/Blogs/NAMI-Blog/March-2017/What-Does-It-Mean-to-Have-a-Mental-Illness
Section 1: Learning Activities Resources

Mental Illness Facts and Myths Pre-Quiz

Daisy/Brownie/Junior

Complete the quiz prior to doing any of the learning activities for each of the five sections. Then repeat the quiz after completing the five sections. You will find the post quiz and answers in Section Five in the additional learning section.

Answer TRUE or FALSE

_____ You can catch a mental illness from someone else.

_____ People who have a mental illness don’t care what people think or say about them.

_____ Mental illness is a medical problem just like diabetes or asthma.

_____ No one with a mental illness has contributed to our world in a positive way.

_____ 1 in 5 people will be diagnosed with a mental illness in their lifetime.

_____ People who live with a mental illness can live well and feel better.
Section 1: Learning Activities Resources

Mental Illness Facts and Myths Pre-Quiz

Cadette/Senior/Ambassador

Complete the quiz prior to doing any of the learning activities for each of the five sections. Then repeat the quiz after completing the five sections. You will find the post quiz and answers in Section Five in the additional learning section.

Answer TRUE or FALSE

_____ You can catch a mental illness from someone else.

_____ People who have a mental illness don’t care what people think or say about them.

_____ Mental illness is a medical problem just like diabetes or asthma.

_____ No one with a mental illness has contributed to our world in a positive way.

_____ 1 in 5 people will be diagnosed with a mental illness in their lifetime.

_____ People who live with a mental illness can live well and feel better.

_____ People living with a mental illness are unable to work, play or go to school.

_____ Gossiping and making fun of people who live with a mental illness is ok.

_____ People living with depression can just “snap out of it” if they try hard enough.

_____ Attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) is a brain disorder and is considered a mental illness.

_____ Many people with mental illness do not go to treatment because of the stigma of mental illness.

_____ More research is needed to learn what causes mental illness and how the brain works.
Section 1: Learning Activities Resources

Understanding Mental Health and Mental Illness

Many youth do not know basic facts about mental health and mental illness. In fact, many people mix up the terms mental health and mental illness.

Mental Health vs. Mental Illness Brainstorm

Divide the troop into 4 groups. Give each group a piece of flip chart paper with one of four terms written at the top: Physical health / Mental health / Physical illness / Mental illness. Give the groups five minutes to brainstorm all the words that come to mind when they see their term. After five minutes, ask groups to tape their sheets up on a wall for all groups to see. Ask each group to select a person to read out their list for the whole troop. Ask the troop what they notice about the type of words used on each sheet. Discuss the similarities and differences in the responses to mental and physical aspects of people’s health. Ask the group to give some reasons for these differences. Provide the definitions of mental health and mental illness and lead a brief discussion on the definitions. After the activity, have each girl write two or three sentences to answer each of the following questions:

1. What is mental health?
2. What is mental illness?
3. Name some mental illnesses that you have heard about.
4. How would a person with mental illness look or act?
5. If you learned that a new student at school has a mental illness, how would you act toward him or her? How would you feel about him or her?

Resource: Canadian Mental Health Association Mental Health & High School Curriculum Guide Understanding Mental Health and Mental Illness


**Description:**
Since mental illnesses are brain disorders, it is helpful to learn more about this important organ. The brain is an incredibly complex organ. It makes up only 2 percent of our body weight, yet it consumes 20 percent of the oxygen we breathe and the energy we take in. It controls virtually everything we as humans experience, including movement, sensing our environment, regulating our involuntary body functions such as our breathing and heartbeat, and controlling our emotions. Our brains work by sending and receiving chemical and electrical signals from cell to cell. These cells are called neurons, and the chemical signals come from neurotransmitters. You’ll learn more about neurons and neurotransmitters in this section. Hundreds of thousands of chemical reactions occur every second in the brain; those reactions cause the thoughts, actions, and behaviors with which we respond to the world around us. In short, the brain is in charge of the processes and behaviors that allow us not just to survive but also to experience and enjoy our world.

**Cerebral Cortex:** Involved in thought, voluntary movement (like raising your hand), language, reasoning and problem solving, and perception (seeing)

**Cerebellum:** Involved in involuntary movement (a movement you make without thinking about it first), balance and posture.

**Corpus Callosum:** Connects the right and left halves, or hemispheres, of your brain.

**Thalamus:** Processing of information you bring in through your five senses, and movement.

**Hypothalamus:** Hunger and thirst, body temperature, and sleeping patterns

**Hippocampus:** Learning and memory, converting short term memory to more permanent memory, and for recalling information about the world around you

**Amygdala:** Involved in memory, emotion, and fear

**Brain Stem:** Basic functions such as breathing, heartbeat, swallowing

**Pituitary Gland:** Produces important hormones, which are chemical substances that control different body functions.
Your brain is divided into halves, called hemispheres. Each hemisphere of the cerebral cortex is divided into four sections, called lobes. These lobes control different brain functions:

![Diagram of brain lobes]

- **Frontal lobe**: (thinking, memory, behaviour and movement)
- **Parietal lobe**: (language and touch)
- **Temporal lobe**: (hearing, learning and feelings)
- **Occipital lobe**: (sight)
- **Cerebellum**: (balance and coordination)

The cells in our brains and nerves are called neurons.

![Diagram of neuron]

- **Dendrites**: receive information from other neurons.
- **Cell Body**: the “factory” of the cell, it makes proteins for the other cell parts, and contains the nucleus.
- **Nucleus**: holds the cell’s DNA, which has the basic information needed to make all the parts of that cell.
- **Axon**: chemical and electrical signals travel along the axon.
- **Myelin Sheath**: protects the axon and prevents interference from one axon to another.
- **Axon Terminal**: It is there that the signal that has travelled the length of the axon is converted into a message that travels to the next neuron.
Neurotransmitters send chemical signals in our brains. There are three important neurotransmitters to know:

**Dopamine:** mainly involved in controlling movement, managing the release of various hormones, and aiding the flow of information to the front of the brain.

**Glutamate:** increases neuron activity, is involved in early brain development, and may also assist in learning and memory. It’s the most common neurotransmitter in a person's body.

**Serotonin:** regulates many functions, including mood, appetite, and sleep.

More about Neurotransmitters and Mental Illness

**Serotonin:** Research shows that people with depression often have lower than normal levels of serotonin. The types of medications most commonly prescribed to treat depression act by blocking the recycling, or reuptake, of serotonin by the sending neuron. As a result, more serotonin stays in the synapse for the receiving neuron to bind onto, leading to more normal mood functioning.

**Dopamine:** Helps the flow of information to the front of the brain, which is linked to thought and emotion. It is also linked to reward systems in the brain. Some studies suggest that having too little dopamine or problems using dopamine in the thinking and feeling regions of the brain may play a role in disorders like schizophrenia or attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD).

**Glutamate:** When glutamate it is released it increases the chance that the neuron will fire, or send a signal. This enhances the electrical flow among brain cells required for normal function. It also plays an important role during early brain development. It may also assist in learning and memory. Problems in making or using glutamate have been linked to many mental disorders, including autism, obsessive compulsive disorder (OCD), schizophrenia, and depression.


Neuroscience for Kids [http://faculty.washington.edu/chudler/neurok.html](http://faculty.washington.edu/chudler/neurok.html).


**Learning Objective:**

Girl Scouts will examine the brain and its influence on thoughts, feelings, and behavior associated with mental illness.

**Learning Activities**

**Discover:**

Explore the following resources and discuss what you learned about the structure and functions of the brain.

1. Brain Structure by Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory. This is a free app for IPhone, iPad, and Android products.

2. KidsHealth.org is a site that offers basic information about the brain. Use the search function to find information about mental illness common in children. [http://kidshealth.org/kid/htbw/brain.html](http://kidshealth.org/kid/htbw/brain.html)


4. Brainu.org web site offers various teaching lessons for teachers that use hands on learning experiences for understanding the function and structure of the brain.
Section 2: Additional Learning Activities

1. Imagine you had to tell someone else about the parts of the brain. How would you do it? Select one of the ideas below and share what you have learned about parts of the brain:

   a) Make a model
   b) Create a slide presentation
   c) Draw a poster

2. Review the new brain science words you have learned by playing a game called Brain Freeze Tag. Brain Freeze tag will help you review and reinforce your knowledge of brain vocabulary, as you play a game of tag with your troop. Be sure to have a diagram/chart of the brain to help you review before you play, and a big piece of paper and a marker. Ask your troop to name brain science words which they have learned and write a list of the words you and your troop can name. These can be parts of the brain, parts of a neuron, and names of neurotransmitters.

   a) Rules of Brain Freeze Tag:
   Brain-freeze tag is similar to the game of "freeze tag" with a few different rules. Start with one player who is "it." This player then tries to tag another player. A tagged player must freeze (hold still). The only way for the player to get unfrozen is to have another player touch her hand AND say a neuroscience word. After the word is said, both players are back in the game and must avoid the "it" player.

   To make the game harder, you can make a rule that the same neuroscience word cannot be used during a single game. At the end of the game, talk about which brain science vocabulary words were used while you played. Were there any words you didn’t use? Play as many times as you’d like!

   Adapted from an activity developed by Melissa Yoshioka, Maui Community College, as found on https://faculty.washington.edu/chudler/letag.html

3. Make a model of a neuron- using beads! Be able to tell another person about each part of your neuron model.

   a) Bead Neuron Model:
   Bead Neuron – Gather the correct number of beads needed to make the neuron (next page). Be sure to gather different color beads for the six parts. Record the color of the bead for each part.

   • Dendrites = 20 beads _____________________________________________________________(color)
   • Tips of the Dendrites = 5 beads _____________________________________________________________(color)
   • Cell Body = 6 beads _____________________________________________________________(color)
   • Nucleus = 1 bead _____________________________________________________________(color)
   • Axon = 7 beads _____________________________________________________________(color)
   • Synaptic Terminal = 2 beads _____________________________________________________________(color)
Section 2: Additional Learning Activities

Directions: To make a bead neuron, string the beads using the pattern in the diagrams below. The string can be yarn, rope, or flexible wire. Starting with a different colored bead at the tip of the dendrite indicates the postsynaptic part of the dendrite, closest to the presynaptic nerve terminal. This is where the dendrite senses (tastes) the neurotransmitter released (spit out) by the nerve terminal from the previous neuron.

Step 1: Start with one of the Tip of the Dendrite beads and 4 Dendrite beads. Make the first dendrite using these beads.

Step 2: Add two cell body beads.

Step 3: Add two more dendrites (5 beads each - see Step 1).

Step 4: Add two cell body beads and the nucleus between the cell body beads.

Step 5: Add two more dendrites (five beads each).

Step 6: Finish the cell body using two beads.
Section 2: Additional Learning Activities

Step 7: Construct the axon using seven beads. Tie a knot after the 7th bead.

Step 8: Add the synaptic terminal beads to the end of each string. Tie a knot below each bead. Label the neuron parts.

Adapted original activity found at http://brainu.org/sites/brainu.org/files/lessons/sg-beadneuron-rev00-081106.pdf
Section 2: Additional Learning Activities

4. Brain Structures & Mental Illness

Complete the diagram which links parts of the brain to certain mental illnesses. Use the following internet resource to help you: https://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/educational-resources/brain-basics/brain-basics.shtml#WorkingBrain

Find the “Brain Regions” section. Use the information you find to complete the activity:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Amygdala</th>
<th>Prefrontal Cortex</th>
<th>Hippocampus</th>
<th>Anterior Cingulate Cortex</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Pick a color for each of these four regions. Color them on the diagram above, and list a mental illness associated with each part on the lines below.

Amygdala  _________________________________________________________

Hippocampus _______________________________________________________  

Prefrontal Cortex _________________________________________________

Anterior Cingulate Cortex ___________________________________________
Section 2: Additional Learning Activities

Mental Illness and The Brain

We have many specialized brain systems that work across specific brain regions to help us talk, help us make sense of what we see, and help us to solve a problem.

![Brain Diagram](image)

Here are some of the regions of the brain most commonly studied in mental health research:

**Amygdala**
This is the brain's "fear hub," which activates our natural "fight-or-flight" response to confront or escape from a dangerous situation. The amygdala also appears to be involved in learning to fear an event, such as touching a hot stove, and learning not to fear, such as overcoming a fear of spiders. Studying how the amygdala helps create memories of fear and safety may help improve treatments for anxiety disorders like phobias or post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).

**Prefrontal Cortex (PFC)**
A part of the cerebral cortex, this is the seat of the brain's executive functions, such as judgment, decision making, and problem solving. Different parts of the PFC are involved in using short-term or "working" memory and in retrieving long-term memories. This area of the brain also helps to control the amygdala during stressful events. Some research shows that people who have PTSD or Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) have reduced activity in their PFCs.

**Anterior Cingulate Cortex (ACC)**
The ACC is a part of the frontal lobe of the cerebral cortex. It has many different roles, from controlling blood pressure and heart rate to responding when we sense a mistake, helping us feel motivated and stay focused on a task, and managing proper emotional reactions. Reduced ACC activity or damage to this brain area has been linked to disorders such as ADHD, schizophrenia, and depression.

**Hippocampus**
Helps create and file new memories. When the hippocampus is damaged, a person can't create new memories, but can still remember past events and learned skills, and carry on a conversation, all which rely on different parts of the brain. The hippocampus may be involved in mood disorders like bipolar disorder and depression through its control of a major mood circuit called the hypothalamic-pituitary-adrenal (HPA) axis.

**Source:** [https://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/educational-resources/brain-basics/brain-basics.shtml#WorkingBrain](https://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/educational-resources/brain-basics/brain-basics.shtml#WorkingBrain)
SECTION 3

What are the signs, treatments, and ways to live well in recovery for a variety of mental illnesses?

Description:
When a person has a mental illness, they are not alone. One in five American adults experiences some form of mental illness in any given year. And across the population, 1 in every 25 adults is living with a serious mental health condition such as schizophrenia, bipolar disorder or long-term recurring major depression.

As with other serious illnesses, mental illness is not the fault of the person, nor that of the people around you, but widespread misunderstandings about mental illness remain. Many people don't seek treatment or remain unaware that their behaviors or symptoms could be connected to a mental health condition. People may expect a person with serious mental illness to look visibly different from others, and they may tell someone who doesn't "look ill" to "get over it" through willpower. These misperceptions add to the challenges of living with a mental health condition.

Every year people overcome the challenges of mental illness to do the things they enjoy. Through developing and following a treatment plan, a person can dramatically reduce many symptoms. People with mental illness can and do pursue higher education, succeed in their careers, make friends and have relationships. Mental illness can slow people down, however does not stop people from living well in recovery.

Resource: National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI)
https://www.nami.org/Find-Support/Living-with-a-Mental-Health-Condition

Learning Objective:
Girls Scouts will describe common signs, treatment, and ways to live well in recovery for a variety of mental health conditions.

Learning Activities:
Discover:
Explore the following resources and discuss what you learned about the mental illness.

1. Invite a mental health professional to speak to your troop and find out about mental illness and treatment.

2. Search a web site or contact a mental health clinic that specializes in mental health for children such as Catalpa Health Center https://catalpahealth.org/ or Rogers Behavioral Health https://rogersbh.org/. Discuss your findings with your troop.

3. Invite someone from the local affiliate of the National Alliance on Mental Illness to give a testimonial of sharing their story about living with a mental illness. Request a young adult NAMI Talks Speaker from NAMI Fox Valley to provide an outreach presentation for middle or high school students https://www.namifoxvalley.org/education/nami-talks-speaker-bureau/ or contact another affiliate to request a NAMI In Our Own Voice presenter https://www.nami.org/Find-Support/NAMI-Programs/NAMI-In-Our-Own-Voice.

4. Research one mental health condition. Is the cause known? What are the signs and symptoms? What are treatment strategies and ways to live well in recovery? Use the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) Web site https://www.nami.org/Learn-More/Mental-Health-Conditions
**Connect:**

1. Review the YouTube video called “Talking Mental Health” which can begin conversations about mental health and mental illness with elementary school students. This is a project by Anna Freud National Centre for Children and Families. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nCrjevx3-Js.

2. Read a book or see a play or movie in which there is a character that lives with a mental illness. Discuss with your troop how mental illness was portrayed in the book or movie.

   Use the following resources to find a book or movie.

   10 books to read during mental health awareness month: http://www.penguinteens.com/10-books-to-read-during-mental-health-awareness-month/


3. Explore Kids Health.org web site http://kidshealth.org/teen/your mind/ which is written for teens and review the information about mental health issues including anxiety, depression and eating disorders. Express through art, music or writing how a person living with a specific mental illness might feel.

4. View the following stories from youth who experience and live with a mental illness. Share with your troop questions you might ask to learn more about mental illness. What surprised you after watching the videos?
   
   a) Anastasia’s story about living with depersonalization disorder and depression story and Val’s story about ADHD and OCD https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LxwBvNOPd5A
   
   b) Katie’s story about living with OCD https://rogersbh.org/testimonial/10
   
   c) Mackenzie’s story about living with depression https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nBLefGPM3esare

**Take Action:**

1. Create a brochure, poster, or PowerPoint presentation using your findings about a mental illness and share it with your school counselor or teacher at your school.

2. Check your school or community library for the books you learned about and submit a request to add those titles to the library’s collection if they are not already there.

3. Research “fidget” tools and educate people on how they can be used productively in classrooms, day care centers, or other youth programs.
Section 3: Additional Learning Activities

You Have to Learn It to Teach It

**Objectives:** Participants will understand that there are different types of mental illnesses.

**Time:** 40 minutes

**Materials:** Large chart paper, markers, tape, scissors, descriptions of (9) mental health challenges

**Preparation before the activity:** Write out descriptions of each of the mental health challenges (ADHD, Anxiety, Autism Spectrum Disorder, Bi-Polar Disorder, Depression, Eating Disorders, Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, and Schizophrenia) and place each description in a separate envelope.

Create 9 different workstations using 9 sheets of large chart paper taped to the wall. Number each station 1-9. Write on the board the following: • ADHD • Anxiety • Autism Spectrum Disorder • Bi-Polar Disorder • Depression • Eating Disorders • Post Traumatic Stress Disorder • Schizophrenia Reading item-by-item, asking if anyone knows what each term means?

Let the troop know that the learning activity is going to focus on learning something about each of these mental health challenges. (Note to facilitator/leader: Share with the troop that they might know someone who has experienced one of these challenges but remind them that this is not about telling someone else's story, but more about just understanding what each term is about.)

1. Divide the troop by numbering each girl 1 through 9. Have each youth go to the workstation that has her number. “All the ones to the one station, etc.”

2. Hand out one envelope containing one of the 9 mental health challenges to each group.

3. Instruct the groups to read the paragraph and put the name of their mental health challenge at the top of their chart paper. Using the content in their paragraph, each group should create 4 - 5 bullets or short sentences that describe the mental health challenge assigned to their group. Let the groups know that their list should also include some positive aspect related to the challenge.

4. Give each group 2-3 minutes to present to the other groups what they have learned about their group's mental health challenge.

When the groups are ready, have each group present on their topic.

**Note to facilitator/leader:** Before the presentations, tell the troop that you want them to listen not only for the details that distinguish one mental health challenge from the other, but that you also want them to listen for what can be something positive about such challenges. As groups present, circle the bulleted content that has the positive statement so that it is more visible and later when summarizing the troop can visually see what may be a positive commonality across all challenges -- e.g. people can be helped... people still want friends, etc.)

**Lead a discussion with the following questions:**

1. Who can tell me one thing they learned today about mental health challenges that they did not know before this class began?

2. Ask the troop to look at the positive characteristics that are circled. Ask, "As we look at the positives that are circled, are there any similarities across the different challenges?"
Section 3: Additional Learning Activities

Big take away messages to reinforce with troop:

- People facing mental health challenges are just like everybody else in that they want to be a friend and have friends.

- With help, people with mental health challenges can get better and live normal lives.

- Ask girls to select a mental health challenge described here today and tell why it could be difficult to befriend that person. What is it that presents a barrier? How could you get over this barrier or what would it take to get over this barrier?

Resource: Adapted from the Walk in Our Shoes Lesson Plans
http://walkinourshoes.org/content/Classroom_Lesson_Plans.pdf
Section 3: Additional Learning Activities

Myth or Fact

Discuss with the troop the following questions:

1. Who can share with me again what is the difference between a myth and a fact?

2. Why do you think it is important to know the myths and facts about mental illness?

3. How could it be hurtful for people to think that the myths of mental illness are facts?

A fact is a concept whose truth can be proved. For example, it is a fact that there are x number of boys and x number of girls in this classroom. A myth is a traditional story often accepted as a fact even though it is not. For example, it is a myth that boys with blonde hair are better students than boys with brown hair.

Kids can’t get depression or anxiety, only adults can. Myth or Fact

Kids can develop a mental illness, like depression and anxiety disorders. This can happen to anyone at any age.

Kids only get mental illness because they have bad parents. Myth or Fact

Mental illness is not caused by doing something wrong. Also, you can’t cause someone to have a mental illness.

Mental illness is the same as being disabled (sometimes incorrectly called mental retardation). Myth or Fact

Mental illness has nothing to do with how smart you are. A mental disability is a cognitive disability, which means it’s a different journey with different challenges. It’s still important to treat all people with respect, because you don’t know what life is like in their shoes.

Having a mental illness means you cannot handle life. Myth or Fact

Your personality or ability to handle your feelings does not cause mental illness.

People with mental health challenges have to take special tests to get a job or go to college. Myth or Fact

People with mental health challenges do not have to take special tests to get into college, get a house, or get a job. They can work, learn, and do all the things that people without mental health challenges can do.

People with mental illnesses have trouble handling schoolwork, a job, and daily tasks. Myth or Fact

It is common for all people to sometimes have trouble at school, at home, at jobs and feel sometimes like they don’t know what to do. No matter what, it’s good to talk to others and learn what works best for you. What helps you calm down? What makes you happy and what makes you sad? Knowing these things will help you find a way to do well in school and life.

If you have a mental illness, it will be harder to get an apartment or house once you grow up and you won’t be able to live on your own. Myth or Fact

All mental illnesses are different, but being diagnosed with one will not keep you from being able to grow up, learn how to take care of yourself, and get an apartment or house like everyone else.

When people have mental illnesses, they will never get better. Myth or Fact

People diagnosed with mental illnesses can get better. Every illness is different. Some people feel better when they talk to someone, like a friend or a doctor, or take medication. Most people need help from friends and family to talk and figure out how to live with their illness. Not all people have to take medicine or see a therapist for the rest of their lives.
Section 3: Additional Learning Activities

Talking about your mental health challenges is a waste of time. It’s better to just take medicine. **Myth** or Fact

*If you have a broken leg, it will not get better with just aspirin. It also takes time and exercise and hard work. In a way, having a mental illness is the same. You have to be patient, get help, and talk about it- and you’ll start to feel better, too.*

People with mental health illness are dangerous and violent. **Myth** or Fact

*Most people diagnosed with mental illnesses are not violent. Most violence in the world is not caused by people with mental illnesses. In fact, a person with a mental illness is more likely to be the one who gets hurt or bullied by someone else.*

Mental illness is more common in some racial groups than others. **Myth** or Fact

*Mental illness can happen to anyone. It doesn’t matter what you look like, what you wear, or where you come from.*

I can’t help someone with a mental illness, only a doctor can. **Myth** or Fact

*You can help someone who has a mental illness. Don’t call people words like “crazy” or “mental.” If you know people with mental health challenges, try to get to know them and notice their talents and skills, not just their illness. Learn about mental wellness and share it with others. If you hear something that isn’t true, don’t be afraid to speak up and talk about what is true.*

SECTION 4

What is stigma and how can we promote mental health awareness?

Description:

Most people who live with mental illness have, at some point, been blamed for their condition or discriminated because of their illness. They have been called names. Sometimes their symptoms have been referred to as “a phase” or something they can control “if they only tried.” Stigma causes a person to feel ashamed for something that is out of their control. Worst of all, stigma prevents people from seeking the help they need. For a group of people who already carry such a heavy burden, stigma is an unacceptable addition to their pain. And while stigma has reduced in recent years, the pace of progress has not been quick enough.

All of us in the mental health community need to raise our voices against stigma. Every day, in every possible way, we need to stand up to stigma and promote mental health awareness through education, talking about it and showing compassion for those living with mental illness.

Resource: National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) web site

Learning Objective:

Girl Scouts will identify their role in promoting mental health awareness and reducing the stigma.

Learning Activities:

Discover:

1. Read “Nine Ways to fight mental health Stigma.” A handout found in additional learning activities section. Discuss within your troop the highlights and how these may influence how others see a person with mental illness.

2. Discover whether there is an anti-stigma campaign in your community. Describe what you find out. Check out your local NAMI Affiliate https://www.namifoxvalley.org/

3. Review the Great Achievers with Mental Illness page found in the additional learning activities section. Create a collage with the pictures of great achievers you find.

4. Check this resource out http://www.speakupforkids/story.org about mental health and mental illnesses, and information on celebrities living with mental illness. What did you find most interesting?

5. Review the Person First Language found in the additional learning activities section. Talk about how using words can reduce stigma related to people living with mental illness and disabilities.

6. Request a presentation from your local NAMI affiliate for your troop called “Ending the Silence” is a NAMI National campaign to increase awareness of mental illness signs and symptoms among teens as well as a testimonial from a young adult living with mental illness. Two other presentations offered by NAMI Fox Valley include “Youth Mental Illness 101” which is a presentation for high school students that provides an overview of mental health challenges specific to children, their incidence and biological basis; treatment and recovery; the adverse effects of stigma and the importance of advocacy. “Breaking the Silence” is another presentation for elementary school children to learn about mental health, recovery and resilience.
and is based on this YouTube video called Mental Illness Education for Kids
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jf13seh1_2Y.

7. “Half of Us” is a national campaign, which raises awareness about the prevalence of mental health issues on college campuses and connects students to the appropriate resources to get help. The videos below are contemporary rock stars, actresses, etc who speak about their experience.
http://www.halfofus.com/video/?videoID=68&chapterID=1

8. Explore the TED talks: Talks by those affected by mental illness yet successful in life:
   https://www.ted.com/talks/elyn_saks_seeing_mental_illness
   https://www.ted.com/talks/temple_grandin_the_worldNeeds_all_kinds_of_minds

   After viewing some of the videos, discuss how the stories break the stigma around mental illness and how telling their story empowers the person to speak up and break stigma.

Connect:

1. Find a publication about mental illness that helps families and people living with mental illness learn to cope with their illness. Create a bookmark or social media post to help promote mental health awareness.

2. Observe how people with a mental illness are treated in the news, TV shows or social media. Write about what you observed, does it match up with the facts you know about mental illness?

3. Role-play or act out one of the following scenes with your troop:
   a) A person living with a mental illness experiencing stigma and then a person who is experiencing support from others.
   b) A person living with a physical disability experiencing stigma and then one who received support.
   c) Discuss the similarities and differences between the two scenarios.

4. Interview someone with a mental illness or invite them to your troop meeting to tell their story. Find out how stigma affects them. Share with others what you learn.

5. Write a story about a girl who has a family member with a mental illness. Explore “Bring Change to Mind”, which is an organization working to reduce stigma and discrimination against people living with mental illness. Check out the website which includes personal stories. http://bringchange2mind.org/

Take Action:

1. Create an anti-stigma or mental health poster.

2. Create a skit in which you demonstrate a positive interaction with someone affected by mental illness. Present it to your troop.

3. PASS IT ON: Talk about mental illness and stigma with at least one adult and ask them to pass on the mental health awareness message to their peers.

4. Learn about coping skills and teach what you know to a younger troop in your area.
Section 4: Learning Activities Resources

NAMI 9 Ways to Fight Mental Health Stigma

The dictionary defines stigma as a mark, scar or characteristic that causes embarrassment for a person. It causes society to exclude the person, similar to prejudice and discrimination. Like prejudice, stigma is based on a lack of understanding. For example, find out why stigma prevents some people from getting help. Everyone likes to be treated with respect and kindness. Think about how to help fight stigma by changing how you treat others who may be different. Come up with some ideas on what you could do to make ALL people feel welcomed and accepted.

1. **Talk Openly About Mental Health**
   “I fight stigma by talking about what it is like to have bipolar disorder and PTSD on Facebook. Even if this helps just one person, it is worth it for me.” – Angela Christie Roach Taylor

2. **Educate Yourself and Others**
   “I take every opportunity to educate people and share my personal story and struggles with mental illness. It doesn't matter where I am, if I over-hear a conversation or a rude remark being made about mental illness, or anything regarding a similar subject, I always try to use that as a learning opportunity and gently intervene and kindly express how this makes me feel, and how we need to stop this because it only adds to the stigma.” – Sara Bean

3. **Be Conscious of Language**
   “I fight stigma by reminding people that their language matters. It is so easy to refrain from using mental health conditions as adjectives and in my experience; most people are willing to replace their usage of it with something else if I explain why their language is problematic.” – Helmi Henkin

4. **Encourage Equality between Physical and Mental Illness**
   “I find that when people understand the true facts of what a mental illness is, being a disease, they think twice about making comments. I also remind them that they wouldn't make fun of someone with diabetes, heart disease or cancer.” – Megan Dotson

5. **Show Compassion for Those with Mental Illness**
   “I offer free hugs to people living outdoors, and sit right there and talk with them about their lives. I do this in public, and model compassion for others. Since so many of our homeless population are also struggling with mental illness, the simple act of showing affection can make their day but also remind passersby of something so easily forgotten: the humanity of those who are suffering.” – Rachel Wagner

6. **Choose Empowerment over Shame**
   “I fight stigma by choosing to live an empowered life. To me, that means owning my life and my story and refusing to allow others to dictate how I view myself or how I feel about myself.” – Val Fletcher

7. **Be Honest About Treatment**
   “I fight stigma by saying that I see a therapist and a psychiatrist. Why can people say they have an appointment with their primary care doctor without fear of being judged, but this lack of fear does not apply when it comes to mental health professionals?” – Ysabel Garcia

8. **Let The Media Know When They’re Being Stigmatizing**
   “If I watch a program on TV that has any negative comments, story lines or characters with a mental illness, I write to the broadcasting company and to the program itself. If Facebook has any stories where people make ignorant comments about mental health, then I write back and fill them in on my son’s journey with schizoaffective disorder.” – Kathy Smith

Don’t Harbor Self-Stigma

“I fight stigma by not having stigma for myself—not hiding from this world in shame, but being a productive member of society. I volunteer at church, have friends, and I’m a peer mentor and a mom. I take my treatment seriously. I’m purpose driven and want to show others they can live a meaningful life even while battling [mental illness].” – Jamie Brown

This is what our collective voice sounds like. It sounds like bravery, strength and persistence—the qualities we need to face mental illness and to fight stigma. No matter how you contribute to the mental health movement, you can make a difference simply by knowing that mental illness is not anyone’s fault, no matter what societal stigma says. You can make a difference by being and living **Stigma Free**.

Resource: National Alliance on Mental Illness
## Person First Language

Review the Person First Language on this page to learn the right way to talk about mental illness and disabilities. Person first language emphasizes the person, not the disability. Avoid defining a person by their disability or diagnosis. For example, she has bipolar disorder and he has diabetes, *not* she is bipolar and he is diabetic.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Preferred language:</th>
<th>Instead of:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>She is a person who receives help/treatment for mental health or substance use problem or a psychiatric disability</td>
<td>She is a patient</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>He is a person with a disability</td>
<td>He is disabled/handicapped</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>She is a child without disabilities</td>
<td>She is normal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>He has a diagnosis of bipolar disorder</td>
<td>He is (a) bipolar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>He is living with bipolar disorder</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>She has a mental health problem or challenge</td>
<td>She is mentally ill/ emotionally disturbed/ psycho/ insane/lunatic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>She is a person with lived experience of a mental health condition</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>He has a brain injury</td>
<td>He is brain damaged</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>He experiences symptoms of psychosis/ He hears voices</td>
<td>He is psychotic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>She has an intellectual disability</td>
<td>She is mentally retarded</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>He has autism</td>
<td>He is autistic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is receiving mental health services</td>
<td>Mental health patient/case</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attempted suicide</td>
<td>Unsuccessful suicide</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Died by suicide</td>
<td>Committed suicide</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A student receiving special education services</td>
<td>Special education student</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Person with substance use disorder</td>
<td>Addict, abuser, junkie</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Person experiencing alcohol/drug problem</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experiencing, or being treated for, or has a diagnosis of, or a history of, mental illness</td>
<td>Suffering with, or a victim of, a mental illness</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: American Psychiatric Association

THE HUFFINGTON POST
Famous Achievers with Mental Health Conditions

“I don’t know anyone who has a mental illness.” YES YOU DO! People of all walks of life have mental illness. You probably know someone who has a relative with a depression, Alzheimer’s disease, autism, bipolar, or any number of mental illnesses. There are famous and successful people as well...

Abraham Lincoln: the 16th president of the U.S. - depression.

Mark Twain: perhaps one of our greatest American writers - depression.

Vincent Van Gogh: one of the great artists - bipolar disorder.


Buzz Aldrin: American astronaut - bipolar disorder.

Mike Wallace: anchor for “60 Minutes” - depression.

Carrie Fisher: writer and actress (played Princess Leia in Star Wars) - bipolar disorder.

Catherine Zeta Jones: actress - bipolar disorder.

Meta World Peace (aka Ron Artest): professional basketball player - depression.

Pete Wentz: singer for Fall Out Boy - depression.

Adam Levine: lead singer of Maroon Five - ADHD.

J K Rowling: author of the Harry Potter series - depression.

Michael Phelps: Olympic Gold Medal swimmer - ADHD.

*To see videos of these people and others speaking about their mental illness visit http://www.halfofus.com/video/?videoID=68&chapterID=1
SECTION 5

What do local, state, and national resources offer for people living with mental illness and their families?

Description:
There are many types of resources for individuals, families, and agencies with mental health questions or concerns. Some include mental health providers, nonprofit agencies, peer run respites, schools and faith communities which offer services for people with mental health challenges. In Wisconsin, The Northeast Wisconsin Mental Health Connection has as website called, “MyConnectionNEW,” http://foxcities.wi.networkofcare.org/mh/ which is a site that provides directory and vast amount of information about mental health and alcohol/substance abuse services found in the region.

Throughout this site information on key mental health topics, current legislation, and organizations that provide mental health services for our local community is provided. Additional information on medications, local events, and even a mental health screening to assess your risk for a number of mental health challenges is included. MyConnectionNEW is a one-stop shop for mental health and substance abuse information, resources, and service navigation in Brown, Calumet, Outagamie and Winnebago Counties.

Resource: http://foxcities.wi.networkofcare.org/mh/

Learning Objective:
Girl Scouts will explore local, state, and national resources that help people living with mental illness and their families.

Learning activities:
Discover:
1. Invite someone or visit a person from an advocacy group to share with your troop about what they do and their mission in regards to mental illness. To locate a speaker for your troop, check out the various agencies and organizations for support and advocacy found within the Fox Cities of Wisconsin at http://foxcities.wi.networkofcare.org/mh/support/index.aspx.

2. National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI): is dedicated to building better lives (through awareness, services, treatment support and research) for the millions affected by mental illness. Find information about the prevalence of mental illness as well as information about stigma. Visit the local NAMI chapter, find out about their peer recovery services for support and education. Ask a person from NAMI to speak to your troop about the services provided to individuals living with mental illness and their families. http://www.nami.org

3. Mental Health America, another support and advocacy group, works to promote mental wellness. Information about specific mental illnesses is available on their site. Learn about their recent advocacy projects and share with your troop. Check out their website. http://www.mentalhealthamerica.net

Connect:
1. Explore and find out what resources are available for mental health at your school. Share your thoughts with your troop.
2. Create a list of support and advocacy resources that are found within your local community. Present this to your troop. Use the following resource to help you get started: Navigating the Experience
https://www.namifoxvalley.org/resources/

3. Explore all levels of psychiatric care in your community including state, county, private, non-profit agencies. Compare the services provided and determine how they are different and similar. Share the results with your troop.

**Take Action:**

1. Explore resources available in your community, county or state. Interview a mental health professional who works or volunteers and find out what legislative initiatives for mental health are being addresses. Write a letter to your legislator about an issue you care about.

2. Volunteer or participate at a local mental health event.

3. Organize a mental health awareness event for your troop, school or girl scout council.
Section 5: Learning Activities Resources

Mental Illness Facts and Myths Post-Quiz
Daisy/Brownie/Junior

Please complete the quiz after completing all the learning activities required to earn the patch. Answers are on page 32.

Answer TRUE or FALSE

_____ You can catch a mental illness from someone else.

_____ People who have a mental illness don’t care what people think or say about them.

_____ Mental illness is a medical problem just like diabetes or asthma.

_____ No one with a mental illness has contributed to our world in a positive way.

_____ 1 in 5 people will be diagnosed with a mental illness in their lifetime.

_____ People who live with a mental illness can live well and feel better.
Section 5: Learning Activities Resources

Mental Illness Facts and Myths Post-Quiz

Cadette/Senior/Ambassador

Please complete the quiz after completing all the learning activities required to earn the patch. Answers are on page 33.

Answer TRUE or FALSE

_____ You can catch a mental illness from someone else.

_____ People who have a mental illness don’t care what people think or say about them.

_____ Mental illness is a medical problem just like diabetes or asthma.

_____ No one with a mental illness has contributed to our world in a positive way.

_____ 1 in 5 people will be diagnosed with a mental illness in their lifetime.

_____ People who live with a mental illness can live well and feel better.

_____ People living with a mental illness are unable to work, play or go to school.

_____ Gossiping and making fun of people who live with a mental illness is ok.

_____ People living with depression can just “snap out of it” if they try hard enough.

_____ Attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) is a brain disorder and is considered a mental illness.

_____ Many people with mental illness do not go to treatment because of the stigma of mental illness.

_____ More research is needed to learn what causes mental illness and how the brain works.
ANSWERS Mental Illness Facts and Myths Quiz

Daisy/Brownie/Junior

Answer TRUE or FALSE

FALSE You can catch a mental illness from someone else.

FALSE People who have a mental illness don’t care what people think or say about them.

TRUE Mental illness is a medical problem just like diabetes or asthma.

FALSE No one with a mental illness has contributed to our world in a positive way.

TRUE 1 in 5 people will be diagnosed with a mental illness in their lifetime.

TRUE People who live with a mental illness can live well and feel better.
ANSWERS Mental Illness Facts and Myths Quiz

Cadette/Senior/Ambassador

Answer TRUE or FALSE

FALSE You can catch a mental illness from someone else.

FALSE People who have a mental illness don’t care what people think or say about them.

TRUE Mental illness is a medical problem just like diabetes or asthma.

FALSE No one with a mental illness has contributed to our world in a positive way.

TRUE 1 in 5 people will be diagnosed with a mental illness in their lifetime.

TRUE People who live with a mental illness can live well and feel better.

TRUE People living with a mental illness can work, play and go to school.

FALSE Gossiping and making fun of people who live with a mental illness is ok.

FALSE People living with depression can just “snap out of it” if they try hard enough.

TRUE Attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) is a brain disorder and is considered a mental illness.

TRUE Many people with mental illness do not go to treatment because of the stigma of mental illness.

TRUE More research is needed to learn what causes mental illness and how the brain works.