

Month at a Glance: December

Activity	Enduring Understanding	Vocabulary	Time Needed for Completion
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The Emotional Roller Coaster	All emotions serve an important purpose.	joy, anger, sadness, disgust, fear	45 minutes
Depression vs. Sadness: What's the Difference?	Sadness is a human emotion that an event can trigger, but depression is outside a person's normal behavior.	depression, sadness, triggers	45 minutes
I Can Cope	Creating alternatives to holding our feelings inside helps us to develop better emotional wellness practices.	cope, emotion, feeling, outlet	45 minutes
Heads Down, Thumbs Up	There's almost always someone who can relate to the situations that challenge us.	cope, emotion, feeling, outlet	45 minutes
What would Ace Do?	Reflective opportunities.		5-30 minutes

December



Activity Plan

Title: The Emotional Roller Coaster

Suggested Time: 45 minutes

Suggested Grade Level(s): 6th–8th

<p>Activity Objective:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Scholars will discover ways to manage their emotions. <p>Materials:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> emotion images pencils sticky notes <p>Vocabulary:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> joy anger sadness disgust fear 	<p>Activity Overview: Scholars will raise community awareness around balancing emotions.</p>	
	<p>Bridge (Connect & Engage)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The facilitator will display various emotional images at the start of the session. Facilitator: <i>When viewing these images, what emotions come to mind? Talk within your group about why you feel the image represents that emotion.</i> Allow scholars to share their responses with the group.
	<p>Boost (Teach)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Facilitator: <i>Let's think about some common feelings and emotions. You may even think about these emotions based on certain age groups. And...GO!</i> The facilitator will write student responses and prompt scholars as needed for additional responses. Divide the emotions into the categories of joy, sadness, anger, fear, and disgust. As scholars name emotions, the facilitator will explain that organizing emotions helps the brain to process them. Additionally, the facilitator should explain that emotions can change throughout the day and that's OK! It's ok to be on an emotional roller coaster sometimes! Facilitator: <i>In life, all these emotions serve an important purpose. They provide clarity for our true feelings in our current environments. These emotions can help us connect with others, avoid danger, or recover from loss.</i>



**Build (Rehearse
& Build for
Transfer/Close)**

- Scholars will write an emotion on a sticky note. The facilitator will ask them to find a partner to trade their note with. Each scholar will read the emotion from the note and suggest ways to safely cope with it. Scholars will then find another scholar to trade sticky notes with. Each scholar will read the emotion from the note and suggest ways to safely cope with it. The facilitator can allow scholars to do 3–4 rounds if time permits.
- After the final round, the facilitator can have everyone return to their seats.
- **Facilitator:** *Scholars, by now you have had an opportunity to share with at least two people. Who would like to share their emotion and the advice you have been given to help you cope with it?*

Differentiation Station

Suggestions for Remediation

Suggestions for Acceleration

Special Education & English Learner Scaffolds



The facilitator can ask prompting questions.

The facilitator can allow an extended amount of time for scholars to share. They do not have to rotate as many times as outlined in the guidance.

Scholars can create a blurb for a community message that promotes healthy ways to cope with negative emotions.

Scholars can create a PSA or community quick sheet entitled **The Emotional Roller Coaster**

Scholars can think in pairs and share ideas with their partner during the activity for support.

Scholars can use emojis to share their emotions.

Activity Reflection:

The facilitator should ask scholars the following questions:

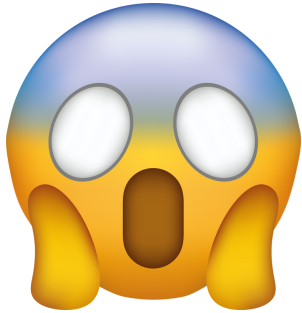
- What are some healthy ways we can cope with our emotions?
- How did it feel to trade emotions with other scholars? What strategies did you share?
- Why is it important to name our emotions in a healthy way?

Supplemental Resources: N/A



The Emotional Roller Coaster

Fear



Anger



Disgust



Sadness



Joy



Activity Plan

Title: Depression vs. Sadness—What’s the Difference

Suggested Time: 45 minutes

Suggested Grade Level(s): 6th–8th

<p>Activity Objective:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Scholars will identify the difference between sadness and depression. <p>Materials:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> construction paper markers pencils scissors sadness-vs-depression enrichment sheet <p>Vocabulary:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> depression sadness triggers 	<p>Activity Overview: Scholars will examine and explore the difference between depression and sadness and learn what the possible triggers of both are.</p>	
	<p>Bridge (Connect & Engage)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Facilitator: <i>What is the difference between experiencing depression and experiencing sadness? How do you describe depression? How do you describe sadness? How are they the same? How are they different? These are the questions we will explore to bridge the gaps in our understandings of depression and sadness.</i>
	<p>Boost (Teach)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Facilitator: <i>Sadness is a human emotion that an event can trigger, but depression is outside a person’s normal behavior. Depression affects a person’s day-to-day life and routine. Sadness is temporary and normal. Let’s think about what I just said and work in groups to highlight the differences between sadness and depression.</i>
	<p>Build (Rehearse & Build for Transfer/Close)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The facilitator will distribute the Sadness-vs-Depression enrichment sheet. Scholars can work independently or in small groups to highlight characteristics of sadness and depression. Scholars will then work in groups to create a self-help resource to help others understand the differences between depression and sadness. They have the option of creating something from the list below: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Flip book Bookmark Flyer Scholars will have an opportunity to present their product to the group and explain how it could be beneficial to others.

Differentiation Station

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The facilitator can share scenarios and help scholars determine if the characters in the scenario are sad or depressed.

Scholars can be paired with a peer for support throughout the activity period.

Scholars can have extended time to complete the enrichment sheet.

Scholars can create a blurb for a community message that promotes healthy ways to cope with depression and sadness.

Scholars can create a fact sheet for community members.

Scholars can have extended time to complete the enrichment sheet.

The enrichment sheet can be translated into the scholar's native language.

Scholars can be paired with someone who speaks their native language.

Activity Reflection: Why is it important to know the difference between depression and sadness?

Supplemental Resources: NA



Sadness Vs. Depression

Highlight characteristics of sadness using one color and characteristics of depression using another. Add a key to the bottom of the page to show which color was used for sadness and which was used for depression.

- Overwhelmed by many aspects of your life
- An emotion that comes and goes
- Lasts a short period of time
- Usually diagnosed
- Associated with mental illness
- Temporarily changes your mood
- Vents and cries to get relief and feel better
- Hopelessness
- Low motivation
- Just needing a time out
- Changes in sleep
- Trouble concentrating
- Irritability about a situation
- Caused by a disappointing event
- Tiredness and low energy are associated with this
- Can still laugh and be comforted by things
- Can cause weight loss or weight gain
- Desire to be alone all the time
- Can still do things you enjoy
- Can still be grateful about most things

Was it hard to determine whether some of these were characteristics of sadness or depression? How did you decide? Be prepared to discuss your choices with the group.

Activity Plan

Title: I Can Cope

Suggested Time: 45 minutes

Suggested Grade Level(s): 6th–8th

<p>Activity Objective:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Scholars will learn to cope with their emotions rather than keep them inside. <p>Materials:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> "emotional coping wellness sheet" <p>Vocabulary:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> cope emotion feeling outlet 	<p>Activity Overview: Scholars will develop coping strategies to use when experiencing emotions that may be hard to process.</p>	
	<p>Bridge (Connect & Engage)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Facilitator: <i>I know adults may not always seem to understand you. Believe it or not, I understand that middle schoolers experience a lot of challenges. Unfortunately, you may not always know how to handle the challenges you face. Scholars, we are going to create a list of outlets to help us when we are not feeling okay. The outlets should be positive and might include things such as sports or speaking to a trusted person.</i>
	<p>Boost (Teach)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Facilitator: <i>By creating alternatives to holding our feelings inside, we are developing better emotional wellness practices.</i> Allow scholars to brainstorm and discuss alternatives to holding their feelings inside. Have them record their alternative options list in a journal to use as a reference when needed.
	<p>Build (Rehearse & Build for Transfer/Close)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> After everyone has created their options list, allow them to share them with the group. Encourage others to add to their list if they hear good ideas. Facilitator: <i>Did you hear any ideas that you liked? If so, please share with the group. Allow scholars an opportunity to share.</i> Facilitator: <i>Think of a challenge you may have faced previously. How could something from your options list might have helped you?</i>

Differentiation Station

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Scholars can work with the facilitator to create coping strategies.

Scholars can interview people who have experienced common challenges to share how they coped. They can create a short video entitled, "I Can Cope, and You Can Too."

Scholars can research images that represent coping strategies they would like to use.

Activity Reflection: Why is it important to have strategies for coping with your emotions?

Supplemental Resources:

<https://learn.genetics.utah.edu/content/addiction/mouse/>



Emotional Wellness Coping Sheet

Directions: Complete each statement with a different emotion. In the box next to it, make a list of healthy ways to cope with each emotion.

When I feel...

When I feel...

When I feel...

When I feel...

When I feel...



Activity Plan

Title: Heads Down, Thumbs Up

Suggested Time: 45 minutes

Suggested Grade Level(s): 6th–8th

<p>Activity Objective:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Scholars will leave with the understanding that there's almost always someone who can relate to the situations that challenge us. <p>Materials:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> scenario list marker smart board if list will be projected <p>Vocabulary:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> relate 	<p>Activity Overview: Many times we feel as if no one understands us and there is no one to turn to, but this activity will show how similar our experiences are.</p>	
	<p>Boost (Teach)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Facilitator: <i>At times we may feel like no one understands us or that there is no one to turn to. It is not a good feeling to feel as though no one can relate to you. The activity I have planned for us may show you that we are not as different from each other as we often think.</i> The facilitator will ask all participants to find a seat and put their heads down. They should not be able to see anyone or anything. They should, however, leave one hand free (on the desk) for the facilitator to see it. While heads are down, project the situations. If this is being done in a space without a board, simply take notes on a sheet of paper.
	<p>Build (Rehearse, & Build for Transfer/Close)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Facilitator: <i>I will read a brief description of a situation. If it applies to you, I want you to give me thumbs up, but be sure to keep your head down. I will write on the board the number of students that relate to each situation. I will let you know when you can put your thumbs down and lift your head. We will see how many of you relate to each situation. Please be open to a discussion afterwards. Once all situations have been discussed, be sure to share the number of participants who were familiar with each.</i>

Differentiation Station

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The facilitator can have situations repeated as needed.

The facilitator can choose to only discuss 3 different situations.

Scholars can develop their list of situations based on their experiences and the experiences of their peers.

Scholars can create a digital response option to increase participant responses.

Scholars can use translation devices to ensure they are understanding each situation.

Activity Reflection: Does doing this activity make you feel like you are not alone? Do you feel as though others can relate to what you are or have gone through or is it still different? Explain your thoughts.

Supplemental Resources:



Heads Down, Thumbs Up Situation Descriptions

Facilitator: *Read the following situation descriptions and have the group anonymously share a thumbs up if they can relate.*

- Someone has mistreated you for no apparent reason.
- Someone has said something to you that made you feel stupid or scared to share your real feelings anymore because you felt you would be judged.
- You have felt so stressed about a situation that you felt you just couldn't take it and you wanted to give up.
- You really want to invite this girl/guy to come to an event, but you have never talked to them before. You are worried they will say no.
- Someone has teased you before. They claim they are just playing around, but you don't know how to let them know it really hurts your feelings.
- You have felt as if you were not smart enough to complete a task, and you were too ashamed to ask for help.
- You have said something that hurt someone's feelings. You apologized, but it has not fixed the problem and you are not sure it will ever be the same.
- You have had to - or need to have - a hard conversation with someone you are close to, but didn't know how to start.
- You need to stop a bad habit, but it is hard, and you do not know how to stop it.
- Something stresses you out, but you have never shared it with anyone.



December—What Would Ace Do?



These are reflective open-ended questions for activity openers, closers, or check-ins throughout the month. The suggestion is to focus on one question and allow scholars to go as deep as possible with their responses.

Peer Pressure

Depression Vs. Sadness



When do you feel peer pressure is a problem?

Is all peer pressure bad? What determines whether it is bad or not?

What is the hardest part about making your own decisions?

Why would you want to make your own mistake?

How is a depressed person's behavior different from that of a sad person?

Which of the phrases below describes someone who is depressed? Which of the phrases below describes someone who is sad? How do you know?

- If you are upset for a specific reason.
- If you have lost interest or find no pleasure in doing things.

