

BEHIND HAPPY FACES

Alpha Phi - Key



LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

These outcomes show what knowledge and skills participants should gain from the lesson. It is crucial you review the goals of the lesson with the members so they know what they will learn.



HANDOUT:

It is time to distribute a handout/materials to participants. These can be found at the end of each lesson if it includes a handout. Make copies in advance!



WRITE ON FLIP CHART:

The main points are included in PowerPoint presentations. In the event you do not have access to a computer/projector, write examples and instructions on flip chart paper in the front of the room.



GROUP DISCUSSION:

It is time to prompt participants with questions or dialogue for group discussion.



INTERACTIVE ACTIVITY:

It is time for an activity, like scenarios or a game. These activities help participants feel more connected to the information.



INSTRUCTIONS:

Read information or directions aloud to the groups.



WATCH THE VIDEO:

Each lesson includes videos to help introduce the topic and engage viewers to take part in the lessons. It is important to make sure you test them in advance to make sure the video and audio work on your technology.

Lesson 1: Understanding Mental Health

This lesson provides a definition of mental health and discusses the reasons members do not seek help for mental health challenges. The goal is to allow members to explore their current thoughts and feelings about mental health, while offering a clear definition for them to build a positive foundation of understanding. The first step in getting someone to access help or to accept treatment is learning why they may be resistant. Every mental health challenge is different for each person.

FACILITATOR

To facilitate this lesson effectively, it is helpful to have experience or training as a facilitator in other areas of chapter operations or campus life. If someone is or has been a resident assistant, student organization leader, peer advocate, or is studying to be a teacher, they could be an excellent facilitator for this program.

TIME NEEDED:

25 minutes



OBJECTIVES:

- State a correct definition of mental health.
- Identify personal barriers to seeking help, explore the sources of those and work on how to address them.

SETTING:

- Choose a room that offers a lot of open space for small groups to be able to spread out and not be distracted by others. Members will need to be able to either sit and gather on the floor or move chairs around into small groups.
- You will show a PowerPoint presentation and play a video during the lesson, so connect a laptop to a projector and screen.
- *If facilitating virtually, you should practice the presentation on your video conference platform to ensure the PowerPoint, video, microphone and sound are all working accordingly. You should read the Purpose of Lesson below and review the facilitation guide to be aware of exercises that will need to be adjusted to the virtual experience.*

GROUP SIZE:

Groups should be no larger than 10 to make sure connections and conversations remain personal.

- Before the lesson begins, ask members to count off into groups of 10 (or fewer) and then move to different areas of the room.

- We recommend placing a trusted member or chapter officer in each group who can help follow instructions and facilitate small group discussion.
- If your chapter has more than 150 members, we recommend you use more than one room with different facilitators for all of the small group work.
- *If facilitating virtually, use the breakout room feature of your video conference platform to create groups.*

MATERIALS NEEDED:

- For each group: One flip chart piece of paper and markers
- For each person: One notecard
- Projector and screen
- “Understanding Mental Health” PowerPoint
- “Understanding Mental Health” video

WHAT TO KNOW ABOUT THIS LESSON

PURPOSE OF LESSON:

The purpose of this first lesson is to give members a clear definition of mental health and have them participate in an activity that allows them to connect further. When most members hear the words “mental health” they tend to think of negative associations. They think of mental health disorders, difficult events or celebrity breakdowns. However, the actual definition of mental health is not a person who has a problem. Mental health is how we address the challenges in our lives. The key components of mental health are communication, relationships and coping skills. Members need a clear definition of what mental health is as a starting point to be able to understand how to grow their mental health. When mental health isn’t clearly defined, members do not think they need to work on aspects of it and they continue to equate mental health solely with people who have a mental health disorder.

As you teach this lesson, you should reinforce that mental health is as important as physical health. Both of these concepts have a lot of similarities in how we have to work hard to create what we need. Physical and mental health are greatly impacted by our biological predispositions, life experiences, socio-economic status and access to resources.

The first exercise asks members to write down all of the things they think of when they hear the words “mental health.” They do this activity in order to help them engage with the people, things and scenarios that they think about related to mental health. The second part of the exercise has members look at their list and determine how many of the words have a positive connotation, negative connotation or are neutral. Next, members count how many associations they have for each category and discuss why they had more of one association than another category. It’s extremely common for members to have a high number of negative associations.

This exercise engages members and allows them to see that the media and other examples have incorrectly shaped their view of mental health. When you provide the correct definition of mental health in the lesson, it offers an opportunity for members to see mental health in a more positive manner.

- *If facilitating virtually, facilitator or host will use the video conference platform’s annotation tool while sharing their screen or using a whiteboard to substitute the notecard activity (account administrator should confirm annotation is enabled in meeting settings). Please review Zoom Resource: Behind Happy Faces for more details.*

The second exercise asks members to write down one thing that they wish people knew about themselves and if people did know this piece of information it

would help to better understand them. This should be a meaningful experience, something that happened to them, a diagnosis they have, a way they were treated or something that shaped their lives. Members will write this on a notecard and not sign their name. The purpose of the activity is for all of the cards to be anonymous. If your room is small, you can collect the notecards, shuffle them and pass them back out to all of the members. If your group is very large then they can shuffle the notecards in their small groups. Members will read the notecard that they have out loud to the group. Next, they will go back around the group and say one theme that stuck out to them.

You should use this exercise as an opportunity for members to see that they are not alone, that other people go through difficult events and often stay silent and that they can become empowered with this connection. It is extremely important for you to focus on the fact that members have worked hard and are not defined by what they wrote on the cards. They are the people they have become in spite of what they wrote.

This first lesson lays the foundation for members to learn more about their mental health. It provides them with an accurate definition as well as a chance to share their own experiences in a safe and anonymous manner.

FACILITATOR:

To facilitate this lesson effectively it is helpful to do the following:

1. Connect to members early about why mental health is important to you and why it should be important to them. If you have a personal story about why you care about mental health, then share it if you're comfortable doing so. Let members know they should take this seriously. The more that you can make yourself vulnerable and relatable the more effective you will be as a facilitator.
2. Make yourself vulnerable with a boundary. If you are going to share part of your personal story, make sure you share something that you are comfortable with and have processed. For example, if you share that you care about this issue because you have been diagnosed with a mental health disorder and it affected part of your life, then the members see you presenting from a place of strength. If you share something that you are still processing and become emotional, then the members may think they need to take care of you. It's helpful if you can be real about why you care and reinforce what you learned from your experiences.
3. Keep the exercises concise. If you give members too much time, they can devolve into so many other unnecessary conversations. Keep members focused.

4. Allow the exercises to be tools for members to identify how to work on mental health, but not let lessons become therapy. There's a difference between members identifying what they can work on and voicing all of their experiences or pain. Stress that you want to start conversations but that they can do the work outside of the lessons. This is a public health approach to mental health and not a therapeutic approach.
5. Focus on connecting members to their emotions and each other. Have fun when you can. Be positive. Make it a team-building exercise that strengthens communication and connection.
6. It is important to let members know that lessons about mental health require everyone to be open, honest and non-judgmental. Members who share their stories need to feel safe and that the values of your organization are being upheld. Reinforce that the main goal is to start conversations about mental health in a way that can bring everyone together.
7. If a member is sharing their story extensively and continues to provide more details about their life than the lesson is asking for, it is OK to let them know that you hear their story and also want to hear from other members. Remind all members that these lessons are a start to this topic and provide ways to open conversations that can be continued after the lessons are over.
8. The recommended time for each lesson is 20–25 minutes. This gives you enough time to do each exercise; however, you might find that the group you are facilitating wants to spend more time on certain exercises. It is ok to do this when you feel that the group is having a discussion that will help everyone address mental health in a meaningful manner.
9. Show the slide that sets the ground rules for the conversation at the beginning of the lesson and make sure everyone agrees the ground rules.



VIDEO (5 MINUTES)

To start, let's watch a video that explains the purpose of the lesson..

Play the "Understanding Mental Health" video for the group.

CHANGE PPT SLIDE

INTRODUCTION:

- We're going to go through a lesson about mental health. This is a serious topic that affects all of us and can be really sensitive for members. If at any time you are triggered by the content in this lesson you can choose to not participate in the activities or leave the room to talk to someone who can help you.
- Being honest, open and non-judgmental of each other during these exercises will help us learn more about mental health and each other. **CHANGE PPT SLIDE**
- 25% of college students experience a mental health disorder each year. **CHANGE PPT SLIDE**
- Suicide is the second leading cause of death for people ages 15-24. **CHANGE PPT SLIDE**
- Outside of mental health disorders, members are dealing with lack of sleep, stress, substance abuse, body image issues and other challenges. **CHANGE PPT SLIDE**
- 50% of college students don't seek help for their mental health. **CHANGE PPT SLIDE**
- The purpose of these next exercises is to help us better understand a definition of mental health and our own personal barriers to achieving effective ways of addressing challenges in our lives. **CHANGE PPT SLIDE**

FACILITATOR NOTES:

This part of the lesson is vital to helping members understand the purpose of the activities they will be doing. Stress the introductory points to help everyone understand the goals of the workshop.

EXERCISE 1 (10 MINUTES)



PART 1 INSTRUCTIONS:

You will have 3 minutes to do this activity. In your groups, answer this question: What words, ideas, people, movies, songs, books, celebrities and scenarios do you think of when you hear the words "mental health?"

On one piece of paper, each group should make a list of everything they think of when they hear the words "mental health." Remember, the categories to discuss are words, ideas, people, movies, songs, books, celebrities and scenarios. **CHANGE PPT SLIDE**

Give the groups 3 (or so) minutes to discuss. Make sure each group has written at least seven words and move them on to the next instructions.

- *If facilitating virtually, chapter will have to break members up into breakout rooms. As the host, the facilitator can send part 2 instructions via the video conference platform chat feature.*

PART 2 INSTRUCTIONS:

You will have 3 minutes for this next part of the exercise. On the list you just made:

- How many of the words your group wrote down have a negative connotation, how many have a positive connotation and how many are neutral? Count the totals.
- Why do you think your group had more negative or positive answers? **CHANGE PPT SLIDE**
- Give the groups 3 minutes or so to categorize and discuss.



SHARE:

Ask each group to choose a representative to report how many negative, positive and neutral associations their group has. Each representative should also state why their group feels it had more negative or positive associations. **CHANGE PPT SLIDE**

SUMMARIZE:

- We did this exercise to identify what people think of when they hear the words “mental health.” It’s important to know your thoughts in order to have an honest conversation about the topic. **CHANGE PPT SLIDE**
- Often people associate the words “mental health” with negative ideas. Some people only think of worst-case scenarios, suicide or diagnoses of mental health disorders.
- Mental health is not when a person has a problem. Mental health is how all of us manage our emotions. You can build your mental health like you do your physical health. **CHANGE PPT SLIDE**
- The World Health Organization’s definition of mental health: Mental health is a state of well-being in which every individual realizes their own potential, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to their community.
- By realizing that mental health is really more in connection to overall wellness, we can decrease the stigma. **CHANGE PPT SLIDE**

EXERCISE 2 (10 MINUTES)

- The goal of this next exercise is to learn more about the mental health challenges we are all trying to address.
- Sometimes we aren’t aware other people are going through the same difficulty we have experienced.

- This exercise will be completely anonymous.
- It requires trust and a willingness to share.
- The work in this exercise should be confidential to the group. **CHANGE PPT SLIDE**

FACILITATOR NOTES:

You can ask the groups if they would be more comfortable reading the notecards from other groups in the room, so that they can be more anonymous. If groups decide to do this you can collect the cards from one group and give them to a different group. The goal of the exercise is for them to see what others are going through. It is OK for them to read another group's notecards.

- *If facilitating virtually, chapter will facilitate the notecard activity via the annotation tool in the video conference platform to allow for anonymous sharing. Facilitator should create a whiteboard page and ask members to select the text annotation tool. From there, members can select Text and type their response onto the screen. For a larger group, facilitator should create multiple whiteboard pages.*



INSTRUCTIONS:

- Each person in your group has a notecard.
- On the notecard, write down one thing that you wish people knew about you. If others knew this piece of information, they would better understand you. You will not write your names on the notecards to keep it anonymous.
- This should be about a meaningful experience, how you deal with emotional challenges, something that has happened to you/your family or something that affects you. **CHANGE PPT SLIDE**
- After everyone has finished writing, one person should collect all of the cards and shuffle them. Then pass the notecards to each member of the group. It's OK if you get your own notecard.
- Each member reads the notecard aloud. No one should identify who wrote which card.
- After all notecards have been read aloud, each member of the group will say one word or thought that stayed with them from what was shared. **CHANGE PPT SLIDE**
- *Give the groups 5 minutes (or so) to complete the activity.*



SHARE:

- What did you learn from this exercise?
- What did you find you have in common with other people that you didn't realize?
- How do you feel more connected to others after hearing what they wrote down?

CHANGE PPT SLIDE

SUMMARIZE:

- Each person's experience with mental health is different. This exercise showed you that you aren't alone. It's important to have conversations to feel connected to each other.
- None of you are defined by what you wrote down on the cards. Most of you are who you are because you have worked on the issues that have happened to you. CHANGE PPT SLIDE
- Building a foundation of how to address mental health requires us to communicate honestly and openly.
- The stigma surrounding mental health has multiple layers and affects all of us.

CHANGE PPT SLIDE

WRAP-UP:

- Remember mental health is not having a mental illness. It is a state of well-being in which every individual realizes their own potential, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to their community.
- Understanding mental health is important. Having a connection to the emotions of other people helps us form stronger friendships and care about each other more.

Please remind members that they should take the survey at the link provided. Show the QPR code on the screen and ask for confirmation that members took the post-test.

https://corexmstcmk6ytnfrbb6.sjc1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_50CU0PA1vbCPv3