

Grade 5

Health Objective 1.02

Identify feelings of depression and sadness for which someone should seek help.

Language Arts Objective 4.09

Produce work that follows the conventions of particular genres (e.g., essay).

Health Objective 1.03

Demonstrate the ability to access appropriate resources for individuals experiencing feelings of depression and sadness.

Materials Needed:

Appendix 1 - Transparency of How Are Feelings Like a Roller Coaster?

Appendix 2 - Signs of Depression

Focus:

Today we are going to talk about feelings. We are going to think of all the comfortable and uncomfortable feelings a person might have. What feelings are common and which of those are comfortable? Which of those are uncomfortable? Using the image of a roller coaster, we will look at how our feelings go up and down.

Display the transparency of Appendix 1, How Are Feelings Like a Roller Coaster? Cover up the answer, pose the questions, elicit responses, and uncover the answer.

Teacher Input:

Have students think of examples of when a person is likely to be sad (death of a pet, friend moving away, being responsible for hurting someone's feelings). Mention the word depressed to the students and ask for their first reactions to that word. Explain to the students that depression is a severe and long-lasting sadness. *If someone suffering from depression does not seek help, they might become unhealthy.* Explain to the students that even their feelings affect their health and they always need a balance between happy and sad times. People who are depressed have more sad times than happy times. Explain to the students that depression is a serious issue and should be dealt with as soon as it is noticed.

Practice & Assessment:

Have the class brainstorm ways in which a person who is suffering from depression might seek help. *Just as you turned to a certain person or object when you are sad, there is comfort out there for depressed people. If we notice one of our friends is always down and sad most of the time, we should inform their parents or a teacher. With children like yourself, it is important that you seek help from a close adult first. Once the adult's attention has been brought to the problem, then it is time to seek out professional help from someone such as a doctor or counselor.*

Ask students what some feelings or reactions are to being depressed. [See Appendix 2 for a list of emotions and reactions people have when depressed.] Ask students to think of all the people they might be able to go to for help with serious feelings of sadness. [List may include: school counselor, teacher, parent or guardian, school nurse, grandparent, aunt,

uncle.] *Notice this list includes trusted adults who have the skills to help young people get help.* Have the students write a narrative story about a time they were really sad and to whom they turned for comfort. Once they have completed their stories, those who wish to share may do so with the rest of the class. Before allowing the students to share their stories, however, the teacher should read over them to make sure they are appropriate to read aloud.



How are Feelings Like a Roller Coaster?

Answer:

Just like a roller coaster, our feelings go up and down. This is especially true of feelings which are opposites: bored and excited, happy and sad. With the feeling of sadness, a person can feel “down” and know they will be back “up” soon.

Signs of Depression

Put a check in the box to the left of the symptoms that you or someone you know commonly have.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• feeling low, sad or miserable
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• persistent tearfulness
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• not enjoying or getting pleasure from life
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• loss of interest in life, even in favorite hobbies or sports
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• sleep disturbance - either never getting out of bed or roaming around all night and day
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• appetite disturbance - either increased or decreased, including either weight gain or weight loss
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• feeling useless, hopeless or helpless
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• tiredness and fatigue
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• low self-esteem/confidence
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• feeling anxious, agitated or touchy
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• extreme passivity
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• over-sensitivity
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• poor concentration, memory and motivation
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• constant physical problems with no return to feeling well despite treatment
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• suicidal thoughts and ideas

*This checklist was developed from the list of symptoms given on the website,
<http://www.bbc.co.uk/health/conditions/depression.shtml#symptoms>*