

I Didn't Quite Understand It that Way Before

Activity

Resource:

Engaging Students in Healthy Living through Drama

Grade(s): 9 10

What is it all about?

Use improvisation to support students in understanding diverse perspectives related to mental health, stigmas, addictions, bullying, sexual harassment, sexual limits and relationships and reflecting on their own behaviours and actions at the beginning of a unit of learning.

Curriculum Connections

Grade 9: C1.5, C2.3, C3.2, C3.3, C3.4

Grade 10: C2.3, C2.5, C3.4, C3.5

How is it done?

- Create small groups and provide each group with a topic related to the healthy living concepts identified in the curriculum expectations for your chosen grade. (for example, partners talking about contracting a sexually transmitted infection (STI), a relationship conflict,, a friend dealing with a mental health concern or an addiction, an incident of bullying or sexual harassment on-line or in their community).
- Have students create a character or characters and improvise a short scene with their group about their scenario focusing in on the conflict and the characters behaviours and actions in the midst of the

situation.

- After groups present their scene, have students stay in character and respond to questions posed by the class about their character's background, behaviour, and motivation for their actions.
- Facilitate a group debriefing session. Have the students reflect on what they learned, their and others' reaction to the work of their peers, and what the group as a whole can take away from the session.

What may be needed?

A list of concepts to provide contexts for improvisation

Opportunities for assessment

Use the improvisation and character responses to assess what students understand about a concept, what they are curious about, to learn more about students' perspectives, and to plan further learning opportunities.

Ideas for Extension

At the end of the unit have students re-enact their improvisations integrating what they have learned about the health concepts that were the focus of learning and to apply effective communication skills.

Educator notes

- Encourage students to practice assertive communication, which includes the following:
 - Describe the situation, stating facts (no blaming or accusing)
 - Express how you feel about the facts or situation, using "I" statements and non-verbal communication
 - State what you want or need, using "I" language
 - State any consequence to their action
- Encourage students to pay attention to non-verbal cues (for example, posture, tone of voice).
- Encourage students to reflect on why people may not always choose the best course of action (for example, stay in an abusive relationship, succumb to peer pressure, continuing to use a substance or

maintaining an unhealthy behaviour).

- Encourage students to reflect on their own behaviours and actions and how they may be affecting their own health and/or relationships. The educator should moderate the post-performance discussion, ensuring class feedback remains constructive, correcting any misinformation presented in the scene, and answering any questions that may arise, referring to relevant resources as needed.
- If any inappropriate content or gestures come up in a performance, do not react in a disciplinary manner, but correct it.
- Acknowledge humour as a useful tool that increases memory, confidence, and self-efficacy and helps to combat stigma and diffuse awkwardness.