

7th GRADE: SELF-HARM & SUICIDE

LESSON 2 OVERVIEW

Self-Care Not Self-Harm



Lesson Time:

30 Minutes

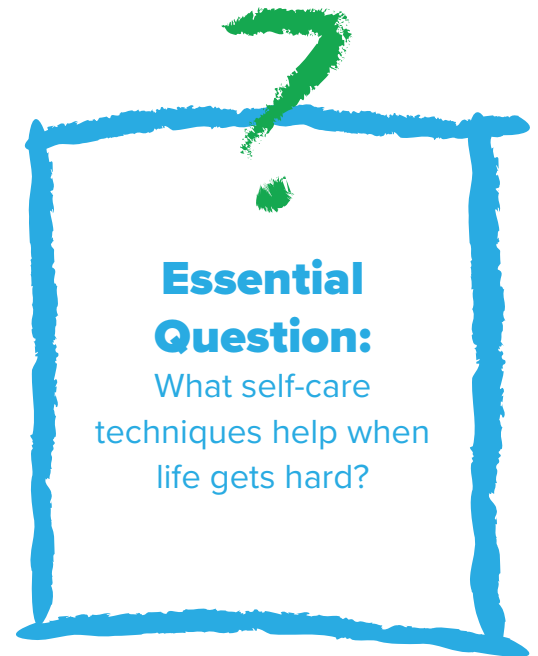
Materials Needed:

- Whiteboard or computer to make and display a 4-column chart
- Index Cards (one per student)

Objectives:

Students will be able to...

1. Define the term self-harm.
2. Define the term self-care.
3. Learn healthy self-care techniques.
4. Develop a personal plan of go-to self-care techniques.



Self-Care Not Self-Harm

Lesson Introduction: (1 minute)

In this lesson, we will explain the terms self-harm and self-care. We will examine the cause and effect of self-harm and explore some healthy options for self-care.

Core Lesson: (26 minutes)

During our last lesson we talked about the terms mental health, stress, anxiety, and depression. We learned that we all have mental health and that anyone can experience seasons of stress, anxiety, and depression. Today we are going to explore two important terms; self-harm and self-care. Let's take a minute to think about the term self-harm.

What does it mean?

Make a large 4-column chart as shown below leaving plenty of room to enter words and/or phrases shared during the discussion. Allow students to share in the discussion. The educator will enter student responses in the first column of the chart.

Topic	Meaning	Looks Like	Why	Effects
Self-Harm				

Now let's review what all of you have shared. You said self-harm is (*read list*). The definition of self-harm is "non-suicidal self-injury, deliberately harming the surface of one's own body."

What does it look like?

Now let's discuss what self-harm looks like. Allow students to share and enter student responses in the second column of the chart. The goal is not to elaborate, but to meet the students where they are in their knowledge of self-harm.

Self-harm might look like hair pulling/twisting, cutting skin, or burning/irritating skin such as aggressively rubbing the skin with an eraser.

Why? Why do some people self-harm?

Allow students to share and write their responses in the third column.

Typically, students who self-harm internalize their feelings. They keep their feelings locked inside. They elect to deal with pain by harming themselves rather than caring for themselves.

What are the effects of self-harm?

Allow students to share and write their responses in the fourth column.

Core Lesson (cont)

The adverse effects of self-harm are scarring, injuries, and even accidental death. Self-harm is unhealthy and dangerous. It is not a solution to a problem, but rather unhealthy coping to avoid the issue. Self-harm is exactly what it says. It is harmful! If you or someone you know is struggling with self-harming behavior, it is important to seek help. There are self-care strategies that help with stress, anxiety, depression, negative self-image, and self-harming behavior.

Now, let's talk about the term self-care.

What does it mean?

Add a second row to the 4-column chart as shown below. Allow students to share in the discussion, The educator will enter student responses in the first column of the chart.

Topic	Meaning	Looks Like	Why	Effects
Self-Harm				
Self-Care				

Let's take a look at what all of you have shared. You said self-care is (read list). The definition of self-care is the practice of taking an active role in protecting one's own well-being and happiness, in particular, during times of stress.

What does it look like?

Now let's discuss what self-care looks like. Allow students to share and enter student responses in the second column of the chart.

Students, you have some great ideas, and I have more techniques I would like to share with you. I am going to list some self-care techniques for you on the board. List any self-care techniques from the list below that were not suggested by the students.

Self-Care Techniques To Manage Feelings:

- Give yourself grace. No one is perfect, and we all make mistakes, big and small. Strive to forgive and love yourself.
- Be active. Go for a walk, run, or do any type of exercise.
- Get creative. Express your feelings through art.
- Jam out. Listen to uplifting music.
- Let the sun shine on you. Get outdoors and use your senses to hear, see, and feel all that surrounds you in nature.
- Call or text a trusted friend. Place yourself around people who build you up and support you.
- Just breathe. Practice controlled breathing. Slow deep breaths help to relieve stress and anxiety.

Core Lesson (cont)



- Write it down. Practice journaling. Writing your thoughts on paper is a great way to get your feelings out.
- Have an attitude of gratitude. There is always something to be thankful for. Always look for the good, and count your blessings.
- Eat colorfully. Eat a variety of fruits and vegetables to be sure you are getting all the nutrients your body needs.
- Sleep well. Have a nightly routine that signals to your body that it is time to rest, and make sure you are getting to bed on time.
- Advocate for yourself. Seek help from your trusted adult go-to person, or speak with your school counselor.

Why? Why do we all need self-care techniques?

Allow students to share and enter their responses in the third column of the chart.

Life will be hard sometimes for everyone, and suffering is part of the human experience. The only consistent thing in life is that life is inconsistent. Life is always changing and evolving. Every person experiences sadness, anxiety, hardships, and failures. Everyone feels overwhelmed sometimes. We should expect life to be hard at times, but we should also know that most problems are temporary. We are all capable of overcoming temporary and long-term life difficulties when we make healthy choices that foster good mental health.

What are the effects of self-care?

Allow students to respond and enter their responses in the fourth column.

Self-care techniques are important to help us deal with difficult life situations in a healthy way. Self-care is a positive solution that will increase our well-being and happiness.

Closing: Essential Question (3 minutes)

So what can we do when things in our life don't go perfectly?

As you can see from our list, there are many healthy self-care techniques we can use to help us healthily cope. Different techniques work best for different people. Take a few minutes to look over the techniques listed and select a few you might like to try. You may have to try a few to discover which techniques work best for you. You may find different techniques work differently with each situation. It is a good idea to have a handful of techniques that you believe will work for you. Hardships can happen suddenly and unexpectedly sometimes, so we need to be prepared with our own personal go-to self-care strategies.

If you know someone who may be self-harming, offer a word of encouragement to them and share your concern for this person with a trusted adult.

(Provide each student with an index card.)

Let's close our session by writing positive words of affirmation to our classmates. Write your name on the blank side of your index card. I will take up the index cards and randomly pass them around the room, making sure no one receives their own card. Please write a couple of sentences that tell the person on your card why you care about them, and describe the value they bring to your life, the school, and/or the community. If you prefer, you may list positive words that describe the student instead of writing sentences. You don't have to sign your name. Raise your hand when your card is complete, and I will read them privately before delivering them to each student. Your kind words will surely brighten their day!

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