



# Room In The Inn: Mental Health Matters

## Lesson Plan 4th - 6th Grade

**Curriculum Connections:** Health and Wellness, English, Language Arts, Reading

**Thematic Connections:** Citizenship, Community, Self-Care, Compassion

### Overview:

The goal of this lesson is to create an awareness of an individual's mental health and its impact on the world. It is important for this age group to learn about this for the following reasons:

- Prepares students for engaging in community action and advocacy for mental health resources
- Fosters self-awareness for a student's own actions and mental and emotional wellness
- Begins broadening students' understanding of the impact of mental wellness on a community

### Goals for this unit:

- Build awareness of students' mental and emotional wellness
- Begin laying a foundation for understanding the impact of mental and emotional wellness on the world
- Provide tangible means for students to contribute to making their community safe for all people

In this lesson plan we've provided suggested videos, discussion questions, and an activity – we strongly encourage group discussion and the activity to ensure students are learning through participation.

Before leading your group through these materials, read the one-pager "[Who are the homeless?: Mental Health and Homelessness.](#)" This document will explain why understanding mental health is helpful as we seek to be in community with our neighbors who are experiencing homelessness.

### Discussion Questions BEFORE Reading:

- What does it mean to be aware of your emotions?
- How do your emotions impact those around you?
- Do you ever feel comfortable sharing your thoughts and emotions with others? Are there friends or family members with whom you feel more comfortable sharing thoughts and feelings?

## Read the book *My Many Colored Days* by Dr. Seuss together:

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iR0-5f-L\\_LQ](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iR0-5f-L_LQ)

### Discussion Questions AFTER Reading:

- What do the different colors represent in the book?
- On "orange days" the author says they feel like a circus seal. What do you think it means to feel like a circus seal?
- On "green days" the author says they are a cool and quiet fish. What do you think it means to be a cool and quiet fish?
- The author says that "purple days" are sad days. What color are your sad days?
- "Pink days" are the author's happy days. What color are you on your happy days? What about your mad days?
- What color day are you having today?

### Reflection Activity:

**For a reflection activity for *My Many Colored Days*, have students create suncatchers to show their multi-colored days.**

Materials:

- Person outline handout (at the end of this lesson plan)
- Tissue paper
- Paper or cardstock
- Hole punch
- Yarn or string
- Glue
- Water
- Waxed paper



### Directions for Creating a Suncatcher:

1. Provide the students with the "person outline" printed on copy paper or cardstock.
2. Students will need to cut out the inside of the shape, leaving the marked edge and creating a "frame."
3. Provide students with pieces of multiple colors of tissue paper.
4. In small bowls, mix equal parts of white Elmer's glue with water.
5. Students will lay their frame on a sheet of waxed paper.
6. After tearing various sized/shaped pieces of tissue paper, they will dip the paper into the glue and water mixture.
7. Slightly overlapping the pieces of paper, they will lay them on the inside of the frame. Be sure that they have tissue paper making contact with the inside edge of the frame.
8. Once the sun catcher has completely dried, help the students peel off the waxed paper.
9. Use a hole punch to make a hole in the frame for hanging.
10. Finally, use yarn, string or fishing line to hang the sun catchers. Use a hole punch to make a hole in the frame for hanging.
11. Finally, use yarn, string or fishing line to hang the sun catchers.

## Suggested Videos:

### Watch this video where kids talk about mental health (5min):

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nCrjev3-Js&t=82s>

#### Discussion Questions:

- Jay's friends are asked "What can we do when small feelings are bothering us?" How would you answer this question?
- What is the difference between small feelings and big feelings? How do big feelings affect us differently?
- Who are some people you can talk to when big feelings are bothering you?
- When someone is sharing their big feelings with you, how do you show them you are really listening?
- What are some things we can do to help others feel comfortable sharing how they are feeling?

### Watch this video where students share about their experience with anxiety and depression (4min):

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dZgMvyRkaI4>

#### Discussion Questions:

- What do you find stressful in your life?
- What does it feel like to be stressed? How does it affect your mood? Your body? Your ability to do what you need to do?
- What makes you feel sad? Mad?
- How do you show others that you are sad? Mad?
- What do you do to deal with or process your negative emotions?
- Who are safe people in your life that you can talk to when you are experiencing negative emotions and stress?

### Watch Pixar's "Inside Out" (1hr 30min)

#### Discussion Questions:

- In the movie we get to see a cartoon version of the different emotions and thought processes that go on inside our minds as we react to different things in life. Do you ever feel like your different emotions are fighting over the driver's seat?
- Each character is driven by a primary emotion. Riley is driven by Joy, Mom is driven by sadness, and Dad is driven by anger. If you had to name the emotion that drives you, which one would it be? Is there an emotion that you feel you lean towards throughout your typical day?
- Riley's core memories make up her personality and she associates those memories with joy, that is why they appear yellow. When Riley first moves to San Francisco, sadness begins touching those core memories and they turn blue. Have you ever had a memory that made you feel joy change to make you feel a different emotion? (Ex: You used to enjoy riding your bike but then you fell off and hurt yourself. The fall makes you fearful of riding your bike fast.)
- When we grow up or make a big change in life, sometimes the things we enjoy doing or people we enjoy spending time with also changes. How do you feel about changes that happen in your own life? What big changes have you had to go through?
- Riley eventually talks to her parents about the emotions she experiences after their move. Who are the people you can talk to when you are experiencing difficult emotions?

## Activity Options:

### Writing:

- Have students write a color poem. Check out this link for more info:  
<https://www.schooltimesnippets.com/2015/02/write-simple-color-poem.html>

### Art:

- Have students collaborate to make a "Mental Health Check Chart" for the classroom. Use this as a tool for students to express themselves in the classroom.

### Service Opportunities:

- Invite the school psychologist or guidance counselor to class. Have them introduce themselves and talk about how they help at school.
- Create a feelings chart for the classroom to give students something to refer to when they can't express what is going on inside.



