



We Are Active Minds Middle Overview

Active Minds is the nation’s leading nonprofit organization supporting mental health promotion and education of youth and young adults. Powered by a network of more than 1,000 schools, workplaces, and communities, and through a vast public audience, Active Minds is creating communities of support and saving lives.

Middle school youth are able and ready to be leaders in changing the conversation on mental health. We Are Active Minds Middle is a free program for middle schools and youth serving organizations to increase knowledge and skills, while changing attitudes and cultures on mental health. Our middle school program is research informed, developmentally appropriate, and promotes diversity and inclusion. Our goal is simple: provide middle school youth with the skills and confidence to create the school community they have always wanted while centering the conversation about mental health. The We Are Active Minds Middle program consists of: **We Are Active Minds Curriculum** and the **We Are Active Minds Middle School Clubs**.

Overview of We Are Active Minds Middle School Curriculum

The curriculum is free and is co-facilitated between youth leaders and adult facilitators and can be facilitated during a We Are Active Minds Club meeting, after-school, class period, or youth programming. The curriculum consists of 20 lessons divided into two sections: “self” and “community” to help youth explore who they are and how they relate to others, while growing their mental health literacy and advocacy skills. The curriculum is informed from national standards and best practices:

- National School Counseling Associate (ASCA) Mindsets & Behaviors for Student Success
- CASEL’s SEL Framework (self and community competencies)
- Positive Youth Development (PYD)

The We Are Active Minds Curriculum is designed to prioritize mental health in schools, organizations, and communities so that youth can engage their peers in building a better world. This curriculum is rooted in conversation and play with supporting resources, including the adult facilitator guide, ongoing education, and support from the Active Minds K-12 team.

Overview of We Are Active Minds Middle Clubs

We Are Active Minds Clubs are mental health clubs for middle school youth. The club will be co-facilitated by the adult facilitators and youth leaders. We Are Active Minds Club is for all youth to explore mental health concepts, advocacy, and leadership. Having a club at your school or organization will provide a space for youth to discuss mental health, build community, and engage in club activities as they navigate the We Are Active Minds Middle School Curriculum.

Outline of Curriculum and Lesson Summaries

Pre- and Post- Test Surveys will be given at the start and end of each section of the curriculum resulting in four total surveys.

Lessons on Self

1. Going Live
 - a. Youth will explore various mental health definitions to develop foundational knowledge.
 - b. Youth will identify at least 2 definitions on mental health, mental wellbeing, mental crisis, or other key vocabulary.
 - c. Youth will be able to identify the differences between mental health and a crisis, while beginning to explore coping skills.
2. Who Am I
 - a. Youth will explore self-image and self-esteem, while discovering ways to build confidence in who they are.
 - b. Youth will be able to identify and define self-image and self-esteem.
 - c. Youth will identify ways to confidently communicate their identity with their peers.
3. Celebrating You

- a. Youth will begin to develop ways to build confidence in who they are, while exploring components of themselves and their culture.
 - b. Youth will identify at least one component of self or culture.
 - c. Youth will identify at least one coping skill to apply when experiencing conflict or stress.
 - d. Youth will identify at least one upstander skill to advocate for peers in conflict.
 - e. Youth will identify at least one difference and one commonality between their components of self and their peers.
4. Recognize
- a. Youth will define and label basic and complex emotions, while exploring the continuum of emotions.
 - b. Youth will be able to define at least three emotions and how the youth experiences the emotions both physically and mentally.
 - c. Youth will be able to identify the range of at least one basic emotion, while identifying when to seek help.
5. Reframe
- a. Youth will gain awareness of their thoughts and their self-talk, while developing affirmations to combat negative self-talk.
 - b. Youth will identify positive, negative and neutral self-talk statements.
 - c. Youth will identify a strategy to reduce negative and improve positive self-talk.
6. Welcome to the Land of Coping
- a. Youth will generate a list of coping skills, while exploring various scenarios to apply them. The youth will discuss when to ask for help and how to use coping skills to help a friend.
 - b. Youth will be able to identify at least three coping skills they can use to aid mental health.
 - c. Youth will identify at least one healthy and one unhealthy coping skill.
 - d. Youth will identify when to apply coping skills.
7. Social Media Dilemma
- a. Youth will develop critical thinking skills to better understand social media and the impact it can have on their mental health.
 - b. Youth will identify at least two falsehoods that social media promotes.
 - c. Youth will identify at least one impact social media has on their self-esteem.

- d. Youth will identify at least three ways to counter social media messaging to increase their self-esteem.
8. It's My Choice
- a. Youth will explore real-life scenarios and decision making to better understand the impact of their decisions on themselves and others.
 - b. Youth will explore how each and every one of their actions has a consequence.
 - c. Youth will explore how to help one another make better choices for themselves and others (leadership development).

Lessons on Community

9. DM Me
- a. Youth will explore effective communication and active listening skills to improve social interactions and self-confidence.
 - b. Youth will be able to define and use at least one communication skill.
 - c. Youth will be able to define active listening and identify one benefit of the skill.
 - d. Youth will be able to identify at least one situation to apply effective communication and active listening.
10. Squad Up
- a. Youth will identify key people to turn to in crisis, while developing skills to effectively communicate the help they or their peers need.
 - b. Youth will identify at least one adult, peer, resource, or organization they can access when experiencing a mental health crisis.
 - c. Youth will identify at least three ways to ask for help from identified sources of support.
11. Have Your Back
- a. Youth will develop skills to validate, affirm, and respond to peers, while exploring ways to help their friends in need.
 - b. Youth will identify at least one communication skill they can utilize to help their peers.
 - c. Youth will identify at least two action steps to support their peers.
12. Game Changers

- a. Youth will explore ways to advocate for themselves and others to support their mental health, while developing upstander skills to help peers experiencing conflict.
- b. Youth will be able to define advocacy as it relates to peers who are experiencing conflict with their school community.
- c. Youth will apply the concepts of self-advocacy and advocacy to develop at least one strategy to help peers experiencing conflict with their school community.
- d. Youth will explore how some of their peers are marginalized and identify at least two methods to advocate for their friends.

13. My Bubble

- a. Youth will explore their personal boundaries, while developing skills to communicate those boundaries to others and learn to respect the boundaries of their peers.
- b. Youth will identify at least two personal boundaries they have and one way to effectively communicate those boundaries to others.
- c. Youth will identify at least one way to respond and respect when they violate another's boundaries.

14. Vibe Check

- a. Youth will explore the cycles of unhealthy relationships and the traits that create them, while developing ways to improve relationships in any form.
- b. Youth will identify criteria that make healthier versus unhealthy relationships.
- c. Youth will identify at least two strategies to create healthier relationships with peers, family, and adults in their lives.

15. Misunderstood

- a. Youth will define and identify stereotypes, while exploring the impact of stereotypes on their mental health and develop upstander skills to interrupt them.
- b. Youth will be able to define stereotypes and identify at least one in their school community.
- c. Youth will be able to identify at least one way stereotyping has a negative impact on their mental wellbeing.
- d. Youth will be able to identify at least one upstander skill to interrupt harmful stereotypes.

16. What's Next

- a. Youth will identify community projects for their school community and develop skills to bring their campaigns into action.
- b. Youth will identify at least one plan of action to engage in self or community activism.