



# DARE

Depolarisation Activism for  
Resilient Europe

## Modern Challenges: MENTAL HEALTH

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# Modern Challenges: Mental Health

## Background (about the DARE project)

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The 'DARE - Depolarization Activism for Resilient Europe' initiative was created to inspire a critical learning space and youth-led and action-oriented dialogue about various contemporary challenges such as polarisation, radicalisation, mental health, human rights violations. The DARE educational materials seek to strengthen active citizenship and European values and promote and amplify youth voices and civic engagement.

For more information, please visit the project website: [www.depolarisation.eu](http://www.depolarisation.eu)

## Lesson Themes

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- 'Modern Challenges' theme - exploring complex, contemporary issues that are not always addressed in the classroom;
- Mental health, identifying and addressing the most common mental health challenges

## Context

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This lesson plan addressed the topic of mental health among youth. According to the World Health Organisation, globally, one in seven of 10-19-year-olds experiences a mental disorder. Depression, anxiety, and behavioral disorders are among the leading causes of mental health issues among adolescents. Our modern way of life with smartphones and computers carries additional risks for young people such as information overload, addiction and cyberbullying.

This lesson plan provides the opportunity to address some of these issues with young people and to explore techniques, methods and resources for self-care and protecting and improving our mental health.

## Goals

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- To raise awareness about the mental health challenges
- To teach about mental health basics
- To inform about what each person can do to improve their own mental health and to encourage students to seek out resources that can help them improve or address mental health challenges.

## Learning Outcomes

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It is expected that as a result of the class, the students will be able to:

- Identify and recognize mental health challenges;
- Analyze elements of modern life that have a detrimental effect on our mental health;
- Articulate and explain different self-care strategies that can improve one's mental health.

## Material and Equipment Needed

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Laptop  
Beamer/projector  
Speakers  
Internet/wi-fi  
Flip-chart papers and markers for group work activity

## Duration

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45 minutes (one standard lesson)

## Overview of Lesson Activities (Process)

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### Introduction (5 minutes)

The instructor starts the lesson by asking students the following three questions:

- How would you define mental health?
- What mental health issues are you aware of?
- Is there anything you do regularly to improve your mental health?

The instructor then announces that the class today will be about mental health. Students are asked to pay attention to the following short video as the class will have a discussion immediately after watching it.

### Short Modern Challenge video clip viewing (5 minutes)

Play the video clip for the students: [depolarisation.eu/mentalhealth](https://depolarisation.eu/mentalhealth)

### A brief discussion about the video clip (15 minutes)

Useful exploratory and follow-up reflection questions:

- What are some of the mental health issues mentioned in the animation?
- How do we recognize mental health issues?
- What can happen if we ignore mental health issues?
- What self-care practices can we engage in to protect and improve our mental health?
- Who can we approach if we are experiencing mental health issues? What resources are available?

### "Mental Health Troubleshooting" - Group Work Activity (20 minutes)

Randomly assign students into five groups (ideally, 5 students per group though more or fewer also works) and give them one piece of flipchart paper and markers, to prepare their presentation. Each group will have one problem to analyze, exploring a specific situation and devising potential solutions for it.

The core questions that each group should answer are: "What could be done to address this issue?" (What kind of actions, individual or institutional, could be helpful?)

## **"Mental Health Troubleshooting" - Group Work Activity (continued)**

Take the group work challenge assignments/problems listed below. Give the groups 10 minutes to discuss their challenges, and come up with their responses or solutions.

Group 1: Cyberbullying - you know that some people in your school are being cyberbullied - peers are being cruel to them online. What can you do to stop this, and offer support?

Group 2: A teacher of yours is being a bully towards a particular student - they are calling them stupid or using other insults, and in general treating them unkindly. What can you do to stop this teacher from treating your classmate this way?

Group 3: In school, you find yourself very stressed, especially at times when there are a lot of tests and exams taking place. You study a lot but struggle with maintaining focus because your anxiety and the fear of failing are paralysing you. What can you do to decrease the pressure you put on yourself?

Group 4: You notice about yourself that you are not sleeping very well, and that you are spending your nights scrolling different social media apps or sites. What can you do to ensure you are getting a good night's sleep, and that you are not so addicted to being online?

Group 5: There are a lot of apps nowadays that promote mental health practices, such as mindfulness and meditation. Quickly research what applications exist in your country (or internationally), and present your findings to the class.

Facilitate the presentation of each group's results (2 min per group), allowing other groups to ask questions, and offer suggestions and feedback.

## **Sources**

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- DARE project, documentation and videos can be found on the project website: [www.depolarisation.eu](http://www.depolarisation.eu) or [www.resilienteurope.eu](http://www.resilienteurope.eu)
- More information on adolescent mental health from the World Health Organisation: [www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/adolescent-mental-health](http://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/adolescent-mental-health)

## **Activity Adaption for Online Implementation**

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This activity can be easily used in an online format. For the group work activity, students can be split into breakout rooms while doing the task. When they are ready, the presentations can be done together with the discussion in the main room with all students.

## **Assessment and Evaluation Options**

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The goal here is to raise awareness and empower students to take individual action on a very sensitive issue, so this lesson plan is not very well suited for traditional assessment and evaluation options.

## **Homework Ideas**

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- Homework idea 1: Students can try out some of the self-care suggestions in the video and write a diary about the impact it had on their mental health.
- Homework idea 2: Research other options for mental health improvement and share them with the class (in brief presentation format).