

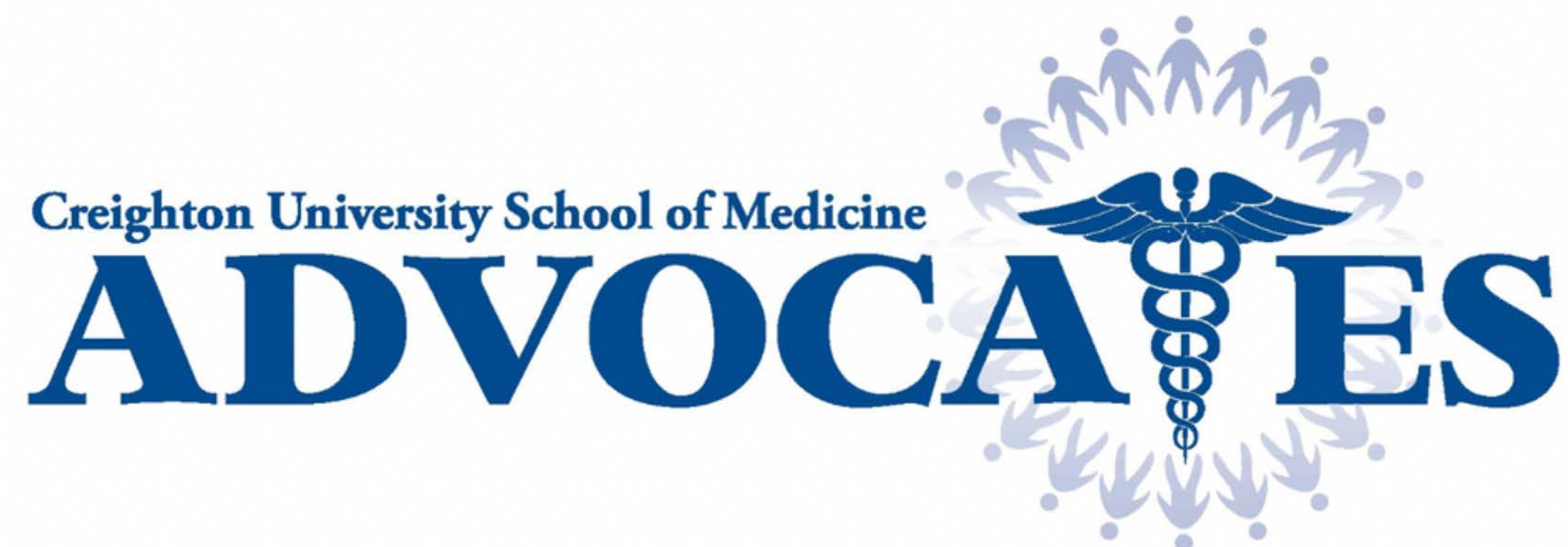


“GROW” EnGage in Relationships and Opportunities for Wellness

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What is GROW?

This new avenue of the Mental Health Branch of CUSOM Advocates aims to address the societal disconnect that exists in the way people address physical health versus mental health. Generally, physical health ailments tend to be more acceptable than mental health concerns. To combat this stigma, our vision is to engage with Omaha youths in a discussion on mental wellbeing. We focus on age appropriate topics such as self-esteem, self-confidence, friendship, safe media use, and others. The goal is to use fun activities to encourage school age students at local Omaha schools or afterschool programs to consider mental health equivalent in importance to physical health.



How does GROW work?

GROW typically consists of 4-5 different ten-minute stations. The core curriculum topics include friendship, mindfulness, expressing emotions, safe media use, self-compassion, and anti-bullying. There are, however, fourteen different wellness related topics and associated activities that we have developed for GROW that may be selected from. We recognize that teachers and administrators know their students best. Among all of the developed activities, we hope that a few can be identified as having particular importance within each distinct student body.

Thus far, we have worked with a contact through the Creighton Health Sciences Multicultural and Community Affairs (HS-MACA) to run GROW at an afterschool program at McMillan Middle School and in a health science class during school hours at King Science Middle School. We are hoping to expand and reach more Omaha youth in the future.

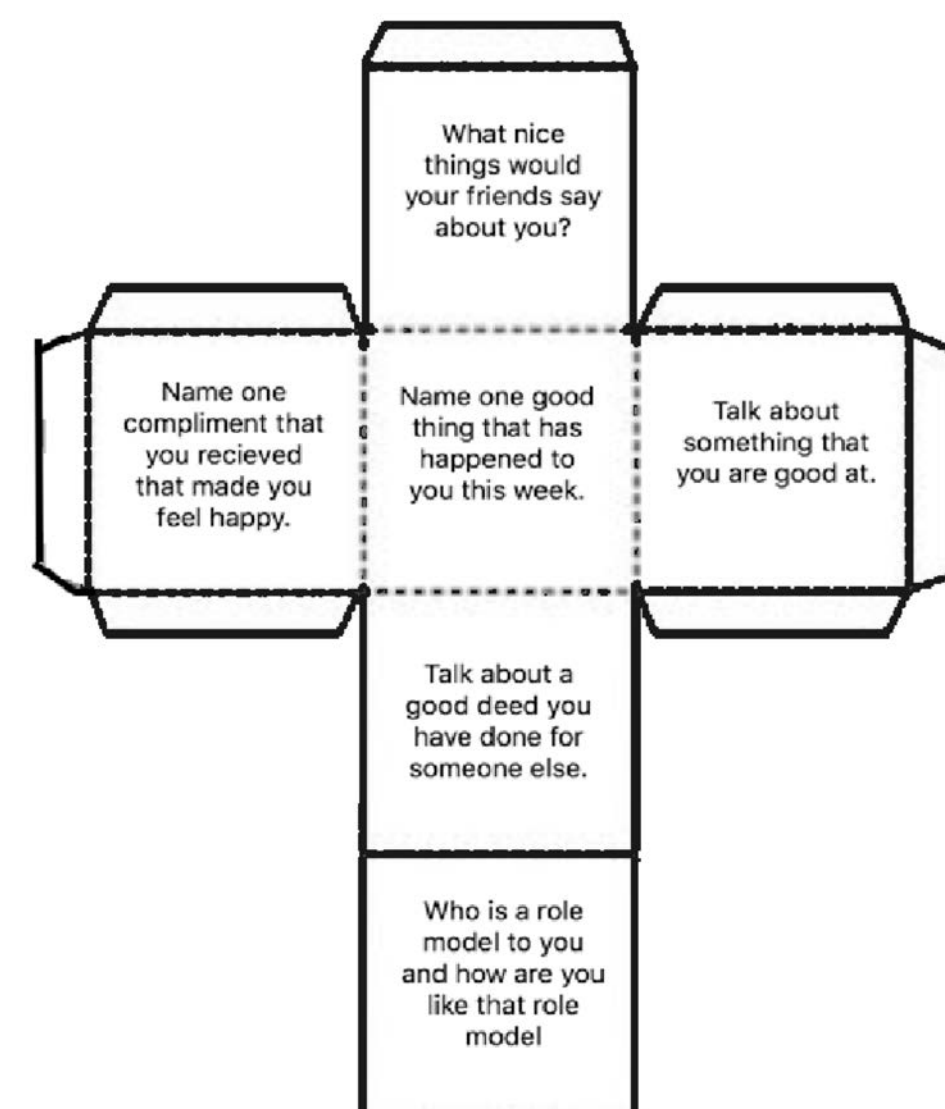


Figure 1: Self-esteem Dice Game. Have the kids sit in a circle. Ask for a volunteer to go first. The student will roll the die and then respond to the prompt on the die. Play continues around the circle until each student has taken a turn (with a smaller group of students, play can continue multiple rounds)

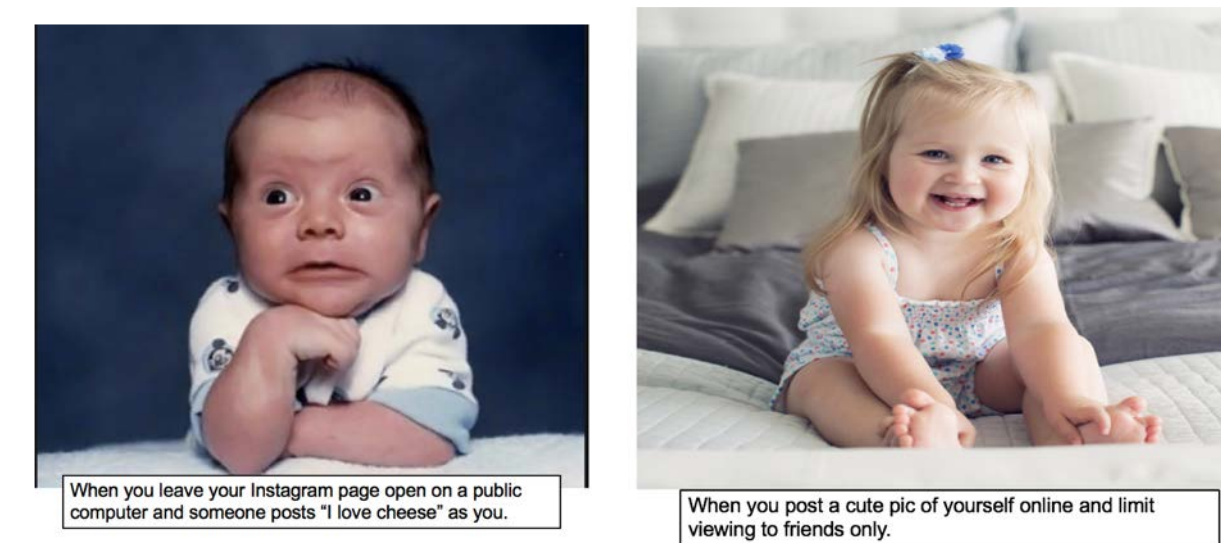


Figure 2: Safe Media Use Meme. The kids can mix and match phrases with pictures and come to a consensus about what are the best combinations (funny or serious). Tape can be used to secure the phrase to the picture and students can take their own safe social media use meme as a souvenir if desired.

Why is GROW important?

A child’s mental well-being is just as significant as physical health. A 2016 study cited by the CDC reported that by 2-8 years of age, already 1 in 6 U.S. children had a diagnosed mental, behavioral, or developmental disorder.¹ Good mental health is pertinent for success in school and life. Early interventions can effectively teach kids coping mechanisms to manage emotions and stress.² Additionally, Integrating mental health curriculum with academic curriculum can decrease stigma towards peers with mental health concerns.³

1. Cree RA, Bitsko RH, Robinson LR, Holbrook JR, Danielson ML, Smith DS, Kaminski JW, Kenney MK, Peacock G. Health care, family, and community factors associated with mental, behavioral, and developmental disorders and poverty among children aged 2–8 years — United States, 2016. *MMWR*, 2018;67(5):1377-1383.
2. Cowan, K. (2012). Mental Health Awareness Month & Speak Up for Kids. *Communicare*, 40(6), 28-29.
3. Weisman, H. L., Kia, K. M., Lippincott, A., Taylor, Z., & Zheng, J. (2016). Mental Health Stigma Prevention: Pilot Testing a Novel, Language Arts Curriculum-Based Approach for Youth. *Journal of School Health*, 86(10), 709–716.

