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Table of Contents

The Mental Health Awareness Patch	1
Patch Criteria	2-5
The Brain	6-11
• This is my brain coloring sheet • Beady Neuron • Brain Puzzle • Label a neuron • Brain Origami • Brain Structure Dominoes	
Mental Health Facts and Myths Quiz	12-14
Do Say, Don't Say Worksheet	15
Famous Achievers information sheet	16
• Word Search puzzles	17-22
Getting to Know Me bookmark	23
Resource List	24-26
Patch Completion Form	27-28



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Mental Health Awareness Patch

The Mental Health Awareness Patch objectives are to educate Girl Scouts about the brain and its influence on thoughts, feelings, and behavior, and through that knowledge, increase awareness and understanding of mental illness. Through education we can change perceptions and reduce the stigma of mental illness.

The Mental Health Awareness Patch was created and is supported by the International Bipolar Foundation (IBPF). The non-profit IBPF is a San Diego-based group founded by parents of bipolar children and teens. Our mission is to eliminate bipolar disease through support of research, to provide resources for families affected by the disease, and to erase the stigma of mental illness through education.

The patch can be earned by Daisies, Brownies, Juniors, Cadettes, and Seniors/Ambassadors. In this packet are activities appropriate for each age group.

Once earned, the Patch is provided for free by IBPF

If requested, a volunteer will work directly with service units and individual troops.

For more information contact: Ashley at the IBPF, 858.764.2496,
areitzin@internationalbipolarfoundation.org



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Patch Criteria

All levels must complete the REQUIRED FOR ALL listed below.

Daisies/Brownies: Complete Required activities #1 and #2 and then choose one activity each from Connect and Take Action. Then complete the Reflection (#3) activity. (5 activities total)

Juniors/Cadettes: Complete Required activities #1 and #2 and then choose one activity each from Discover, Connect and Take Action. Then complete the Reflection (#3) activity. (6 activities total)

Seniors/ambassadors: Complete Required activities #1 and #2 and then choose two activities each from Discover, Connect and Take Action. Then complete the Reflection (#3) activity. (9 activities total)

Please reference the [Resource List](#) provided for suggested websites with information, videos, and activities that will facilitate completing the Patch

REQUIRED FOR ALL LEVELS:

1. Learn about the brain and its role in mental health. In the packet you will find [Learn about the Brain and Its Role in Mental Health](#) to use as a starting place for information
2. Take the [Mental Health Facts and Myths Quiz](#) included in this packet.

After completing all chosen patch activities,

3. Reflection: Review the Girl Scout Law and discuss how it relates to what you have learned about mental illness. Discuss with your troop.

Discover

1. Approximately one in every four people will have a mental illness sometime in his/her life. What is mental illness? Discuss whether mental illness is different than any other illness.
2. Research common mental health issues that children and teens experience.
3. Invite a mental health professional to speak to your troop about illness and treatment.
4. Research bipolar disorder. Is the cause known? What are the symptoms and treatments? Is there a cure?



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5. The dictionary defines “stigma” as a mark, scar, or characteristic that causes embarrassment for a person and causes society to exclude the person. It is similar to prejudice and discrimination and like prejudice, stigma is also based on a lack of understanding and knowledge. Complete the DON'T SAY DO SAY activity sheet.
6. Discover whether there is an anti-stigma campaign in your community.
7. Review Famous Achievers sheet included in this packet about people with mental health conditions who have made important contributions to our world. Complete one of the Word Search puzzles found in packet or create a collage from pictures of these famous people you find in magazines and on the internet.

Connect

1. Read a book, see a play or movie, in which there is a character who suffers from mental illness. Notice how they are treated in the story and discuss with friends or family.
2. Read the text on the Getting To Know Me bookmark sheet created by BP magazine. These feelings are relevant to all mental illnesses. Create a bookmark with similar text regarding mental illness in general. Distribute to friends, family or others.
3. Observe how the mentally ill are treated in the media (news, TV shows, social media). Keep a diary of your observations for at least two weeks.
4. Through role-play, act out each of the following scenarios with troop, friends, or family:
a.) a child coming to school for the first time with hearing aids, b.) a child who has to go to the nurse to take medicine every day, c.) a child who overhears other kids calling her “weird” and “psycho”. What are you thinking as you play each of these roles? What are you feeling? Are the thoughts and feelings different in one role or the other? Discuss with group.
5. Interview someone with a mental illness, or a sibling of parent of someone with a mental illness, to find out how stigma affects them. Tell others what you learned.
6. Express through art, music, or writing how you imagine a mentally ill person experiences society.
7. Write a story about a girl who has a family member with a mental illness.



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Take Action

1. Explore what resources are available at your school for mental health issues.
2. Explore what mental health resources are available in your community (town, county, state, federal). Choose one of these resources and interview someone who works or volunteers there.
3. Create an anti-stigma or mental health awareness poster.
4. Volunteer at a NAMI walk or some other mental health support activity.
5. Create a skit in which you demonstrate a positive interaction with someone affected by mental illness. Present this skit to at least 2 troops.
6. Pass it on- Talk about mental illness and stigma with at least one adult and ask them to pass on the mental health awareness message to their peers.
7. Be a stigma-buster and educate your friends and family about at least two people with mental illness who have had a positive impact on the world.



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THE BRAIN

Required Activity #1 Learn about the Brain and its Role in Mental Health

Additional information, games, puzzles, both printable and online are available on this excellent website:

Neuroscience for Kids <http://faculty.washington.edu/chudler/neurok.html>

The Brain- The Director

Before thinking about the problems that occur in the brain when someone has a mental illness, it is helpful to think about how the brain functions normally. The brain is an incredibly complex organ. It makes up only 2 percent of our body weight, but it consumes 20 percent of the oxygen we breathe and 20 percent of the energy we take in. It controls virtually everything we as humans experience, including movement, sensing our environment, regulating our involuntary body processes such as breathing, and controlling our emotions. Hundreds of thousands of chemical reactions occur every second in the brain; those reactions underlie the thoughts, actions, and behaviors with which we respond to environmental stimuli. In short, the brain dictates the internal processes and behaviors that allow us to survive.

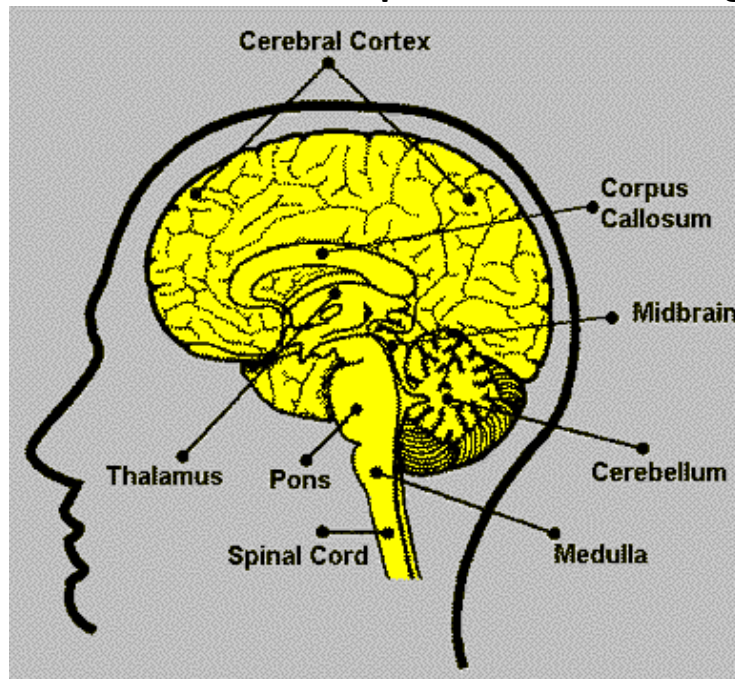
Brain Structure:



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Cerebral Cortex: This area is involved in thought, voluntary movement (raising your hand), language, reasoning (problem solving), and perception (seeing).

Cerebellum- This area is involved in involuntary movement (a movement you make without thinking about it first), balance, posture

Brain stem- Basic functions such as breathing, swallowing, heart beat

Thalamus – processing of information you bring in through your 5 senses, and movement

Hippocampus - Learning

Basal Ganglia- Movement

Midbrain- Vision, hearing and eye movement



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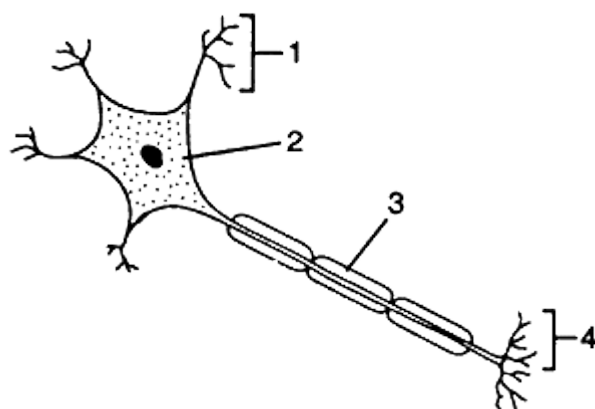
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Query: Did you notice how several areas seem to be involved in the same function? That's because many human functions require multiple systems to work together. How do they work together? They talk to each other! They communicate via cells transmitting information.

The Neuron – The communicator

How does the brain take in all this information, process it, and cause a response? The basic functional unit of the brain is the neuron. A neuron is a specialized cell that can produce different actions because of its precise connections with other neurons, sensory receptors, and muscle cells.



Neuron :

1. Dendrites
2. Cell body includes nucleus
3. Axon
4. Axon terminal or presynaptic terminal

Neurons communicate using both electrical signals and chemical messages. The chemical messengers are called neurotransmitters. The neurotransmitter is formed in the cell body and travels through the axon to the presynaptic terminal where it is released and taken up by the dendrites of another neuron. In terms of mental illness acetylcholine, serotonin, dopamine and norepinephrine are the neurotransmitters thought to play a significant role.

.

Query: What happens when there is miscommunication? When the neurons can not communicate effectively, either due to a brain injury (concussion) or abnormal neurons in certain parts of the brain, or too much or too little of certain neurotransmitters or a combination of any of the above, the result is neurological and psychiatric disorders.



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For example, a concussion causes memory loss, confusion, blurred vision. Alzheimer's disease patients have both structural abnormalities in their brains and too little of the neurotransmitter acetylcholine. Depressive symptoms are related to too little serotonin available for cells, and bipolar disease symptoms are related to several neurotransmitters.

To learn more about known and hypothesized causes of various mental illnesses, search out the resources listed in the Resource page.

To finish this REQUIRED activity, do one of the following included in this packet:

This is my brain it helps me _____. Color as you wish.

Beady Neuron

Brain Puzzle

Label a neuron

Brain Origami –Write brain facts in origami form

Brain Structure Dominoes

Sources:

<http://science.education.nih.gov/supplements/nih5/Mental/guide/info-mental-a.htm>

<http://faculty.washington.edu/chudler/neurok.html>



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Mental Illness Myths and Facts Quiz

Daisy/Brownie/Junior

Can be completed as a group or individually

Answer True or False?

1. You can catch a mental illness from someone else. _____
2. People who have mental illnesses are not smart. _____
3. People with mental illnesses don't care what people think or say about them. _____
4. People with mental illnesses are more likely to be a victim of a crime than commit a crime. _____
5. Mental illness is a medical problem just as diabetes and asthma are. _____



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Mental Illness Facts and Myths Quiz

Cadette/Senior/Ambassador

Can be completed as a group or individually

Answer True or False?

1. You can catch a mental illness from someone else. _____
2. People who have mental illnesses are not smart. _____
3. People with mental illnesses don't care what people think or say about them. _____
4. People with mental illnesses are more likely to be a victim of a crime than commit a crime. _____
5. Mental illness is a medical problem just as diabetes and asthma are. _____
6. People with mental illnesses can't work. _____
7. No one with a mental illness has contributed to our world in a positive way. _____
8. It's okay to gossip about or make fun of people who have a mental illness. _____
9. One in every four people will be diagnosed with a mental illness in their lifetime. _____
10. Depressed people can just "snap out of it" if they try. _____
11. Many mentally ill people don't go for treatment because of the stigma of mental illness. _____
12. Scientists already know what causes all mental illnesses. _____



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Answer Key for Mental Illness Facts and Myths Quiz- All levels

1. You can catch a mental illness from someone else. **FALSE**
2. People who have mental illnesses are not smart. **FALSE**
3. People with mental illnesses don't care what people think or say about them. **FALSE**
4. People with mental illnesses are more likely to be a victim of a crime than commit a crime. **TRUE**
5. Mental illness is a medical problem just as diabetes and asthma are. **TRUE**
6. People with mental illnesses can't work. **FALSE**
7. No one with a mental illness has contributed to our world in a positive way. **FALSE**
8. It's okay to gossip about or make fun of people who have a mental illness. **FALSE**
9. One in every four people will be diagnosed with a mental illness in their lifetime. **TRUE**
10. Depressed people can just "snap out of it" if they try. **FALSE**
11. Many mentally ill people don't go for treatment because of the stigma of mental illness. **TRUE**
12. Scientists already know what causes all mental illnesses. **FALSE**



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As you explore the websites noted on the Resource List in your work toward completing the Patch you will likely learn more about these facts. You might want to retake the quiz at after completing all Patch activities.

DON'T SAY, DO SAY

“.....But she acts crazy!”

Every person is different. You may like to climb trees, your friend may like dolls. You may be raised by a single parent, others may have 2 parents (or more), or be in foster care. You may be the only red head in your class. Another girl may have diabetes and another may be autistic. What do you all share in common?

We all like to be treated with respect and kindness.

Here are some examples of how you can fight stigma by changing how you think about, speak, and treat others who are different from you.

Don't say: Look at the crazy guy talking to himself over there! Let's tease him.

Do say: The guy talking to himself probably has a mental illness. We should leave him alone.

Don't say: She wears hearing aids so she can't play with us.

Do say: Her hearing aids help her participate in all activities.

Don't say: Her dad is psycho.

Do say: Her dad has some problems and is getting help.

Can you come up with more examples of DON'T SAY, DO SAY?



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Famous Achievers with Mental Health Conditions

I don't know anyone who has had a mental illness. YES YOU DO!

People of all walks of life have mental illness. You probably know someone who has a relative with a depression, Alzheimer's disease, autism, bipolar, or any number of mental illnesses.

There are famous and successful people as well. Some are just celebrities, some made important contributions to our society, some are artists, singers, actors. Here are just a few of those who have spoken or written about their conditions.

Abraham Lincoln, the 16th president of the U.S., depression.

Mark Twain, perhaps one of our greatest American writers, from depression.

*Vinny Guadagnino, from The Jersey Shore, anxiety and panic attacks.

Vincent Van Gogh, one of the great artists, bipolar disorder.

Winston Churchill, prime minister of England during WWII, bipolar disorder.

John Nash, Nobel Prize winner for Economics, subject of the movie "A Beautiful Mind"-schizophrenia.

Buzz Aldrin, American astronaut - bipolar disorder

Mike Wallace, 60 minutes anchor - depression.

Carrie Fisher, actress (Princess Leia in Star Wars) and writer- bipolar disorder.

Catherine Zeta Jones, actress -bipolar disorder.

*World Peace (aka Ron Artest), professional basketball player - depression

*Pete Wentz, singer for Fall Out Boy - depression

Adam Levine, lead singer Maroon Five - ADHD



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J.K. Rowling, author of the Harry Potter series- depression

Michael Phelps, Olympic Gold Medal swimmer - ADHD.

*To see videos of these people and other speaking about their mental illness:

<http://www.halfofus.com/video/?videoID=68&chapterID=1>

Resource List

Learning about the Brain

- Brain structure app (free) for iPhone, iPad, and Android products use search term: **3D brain**
- Neuroscience for Kids: This is an excellent site maintained by a professor at University Of Washington. Lots of didactic and hands on activities.
<http://faculty.washington.edu/chudler/neurok.html>
- This site has very basic information about the brain and if you use the search function you can find information about mental illness common in children.
<http://kidshealth.org/kid/htbw/brain.html>

Mental Illness Facts and Myths

- National Alliance for the Mentally Ill(NAMI): is dedicated to building better lives (through awareness, services, treatment support and research) for the millions affected by mental illness. On their website you can find information about the prevalence of mental illness as well as information about stigma. Via the local NAMI chapter you may be able to find a person to come speak to your troop.
<http://www.nami.org>

Ending the Silence, is a NAMI campaign to increase awareness of mental illness signs and symptoms among teens.

<http://www.endingthesilence.org/students/student-information>

Breaking the Silence, is a school lesson plan developed by a parent of a mentally- ill child and endorsed y NAMI. <http://www.btslessonplans.org>



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- WebMD is always a good source of information about medical issues including mental illness. <http://www.webmd.com/mental-health/brain-mental-illness>
- <http://www.about.com/health/#topic-list> has content approved by medical review board about mental health including mental illnesses, and celebrities with mental illness.
- National Institutes of Health and National Institute of Mental Health: Tax supported research and education. The first link is a lesson plan “The Science of Mental Illness” for middle schoolers, and the second link is a presentation of “Brain Basics”, and the third is a high school lesson plan, “Making Sense of Mental Health: Past and Present”
<http://science.education.nih.gov/supplements/nih5/Mental/default.htm>
<http://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/educational-resources/brain-basics/brain-basics.shtml>
<http://www.nlm.nih.gov/literatureofprescription/education/c2HighSchoolHealth.html>
- Written for teens, info on mental health issues including anxiety, depression, eating disorders http://kidshealth.org/teen/your_mind/
- Mental Health America, another support and advocacy group, works to promote mental wellness. Information about specific mental illnesses is available on their site. . <http://www.mentalhealthamerica.net>
- MINDS is dedicated to educating high school students about mental health. Website includes a recommended reading list as well.
<http://mindsprogram.org/default.aspx>

Stigma

- Bring Change to Mind, is an organization working to reduce stigma and discrimination against the mentally ill. Website includes personal stories.
<http://bringchange2mind.org/>



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See also:

<http://www.nami.org>

<http://www.halfofus.com/video/?videoID=68&chapterID=1>

Bipolar Disorder

- <http://www.internationalbipolarfoundation.org/>

Famous Achievers with Mental Illness

- TED talks: Talks by those affected by mental illness yet successful in life. Elyn Saks, successful law scholar, who has schizophrenia. Temple Grandin, famous animal expert with autism..
http://www.ted.com/playlists/9/all_kinds_of_minds.html
- **Half of Us** is a national campaign which raises awareness about the prevalence of mental health issues on college campuses and connects students to the appropriate resources to get help. The videos below are contemporary rock stars, actresses, etc who speak about their experience.
<http://www.halfofus.com/video/?videoID=68&chapterID=1>
- <http://www.about.com/health/#topic-list> has content approved by medical review board about mental health including mental illnesses, and celebrities with mental illness.

Community support and advocacy

It's Up To Us, San Diego is a local campaign talk openly about mental illness, recognize symptoms, utilize local resources and seek help.

- <http://www.up2sd.org/>

See also:

- <http://www.nami.org>

- www.internationalbipolarfoundation.org/



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Mental Health Awareness Patch Completion Form

Check off activities you completed to earn the Patch. Send completed form to: Ashley Jacobs at International Bipolar Foundation via email, fax or mail:

email: areitzin@internationalbipolarfoundation.org

Mailing address: International Bipolar Foundation

8895 Towne Centre Drive, Suite 105-360

San Diego, CA 92122 Fax (858) 764-2491

Required For All	Date Completed
# 1 Learn about the Brain	
#2 Mental Health Facts and Myths	
#3 Reflection on Girl Scout Law	

Circle one:

I am a: **Daisy, Brownie, Junior, Cadette, Senior, Ambassador Girl Scout.**

Daisies and Brownies complete required activities and one activity from Connect and one from Take Action. 5 total)

Juniors and Cadettes complete required activities and one activity Discover, one from Connect, and one from Take Action. (6 total)

Seniors and Ambassadors complete required activities and two activities from Discover, two from Connect, and two from Take Action.

Discover	Check √	Date Completed
#1		
#2		



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#3		
#4		
#5		
#6		

Connect	Check √	Date Completed
#1		
#2		
#3		
#4		
#5		
#6		

Take Action	Check √	Date Completed
#1		
#2		
#3		
#4		
#5		
#6		

Print Your Name: _____

Signature: _____



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Print Leader's Name : _____

Leader's Signature: _____

IBPF would like to hear how you completed the Patch and what you learned. If you would like to share, please add a page or email us.