

## **SOS Myths or Facts Activity**

### **Instructions**

Hand out the “Myth or Fact” worksheet to students, who will either work individually or in pairs, to determine whether the statement relating to depression and/or suicide is a myth or a fact. The student(s) will then provide reasoning as to how they reached their conclusion.

After all the students have completed their worksheets, review each myth or fact as a group using the implementer answer key and talking points provided.

### **Materials**

Student handout

Implementer answer key

## Myth or Fact

### Instructions

Below are six statements about depression and suicide. It's your job to identify which statements are myths and which statements are facts by circling either "myth" or "fact". After you have identified whether it's a myth or a fact, provide your reasoning behind your conclusion.

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1. Depression is an illness that can be treated by a professional like a doctor.

Myth      or      Fact

Reasoning:

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2. It's easy to tell when someone is depressed because they cry all the time and withdraw from friends and family.

Myth      or      Fact

Reasoning:

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3. Teens who use drugs/alcohol are more at risk for suicide.

Myth      or      Fact

Reasoning:

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4. Talking about suicide may give someone the idea.

Myth      or      Fact

Reasoning:

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5. People who talk about suicide won't really do it.

Myth      or      Fact

Reasoning:

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6. A person who attempts suicide and survives is not likely to ever do it again.

Myth      or      Fact

Reasoning:

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## Implementer Answer Key

### 1. Depression is an illness that can be treated by a professional like a doctor.

**FACT**

#### **Talking Points:**

When it comes to depression, people can't just "snap out of it". Depression is an illness and just like any illness, it usually requires professional help to get better.

A trained therapist or counselor can help develop positive coping skills and change behaviors while a physician can prescribe medications to help relieve the symptoms of depression. For many, a combination of therapy and medication is beneficial.

### 2. It's easy to tell when someone is depressed because they cry all the time and withdraw from friends and family.

**MYTH**

#### **Talking Points:**

While down mood and withdrawal are some signs of depression, some symptoms are not as well known.

Ask your student to share some of the additional symptoms they believe to be related to depression. Below are more examples:

Irritability and anxiousness

Lack of energy (lethargy)

Trouble sleeping: insomnia or hypersomnia

Changes in appetite or fluctuations in weight: either increased or decreased.

Remember, only a professional can diagnose depression.

### 3. Teens who use drugs/alcohol are more at risk for suicide.

**FACT**

#### **Talking Points:**

Substance use is a major predictor for youth suicide.

Both teens and adults can develop substance use problems that put them at risk for suicide and need to be treated by a professional.

Using substances clouds judgment so people tend to take big risks and do dangerous things when they are drunk/high.

Early intervention and treatment for all mental health concerns (including substance use) are the best protection from suicide risk.

### 4. Talking about suicide many give someone the idea.

**MYTH**

#### **Talking Points:**

You don't give a suicidal person morbid ideas by talking about suicide. The opposite is true.

Bringing up the subject of suicide and discussing it openly is one of the most helpful things you can do.

**5. People who talk about suicide won't really do it.****MYTH*****Talking Points:***

Almost everyone who dies by suicide has given some clue or warning. Do not ignore suicide threats.

Statements like "You'll be sorry when I'm dead," or "I can't see any way out" – no matter how casually or jokingly said – may indicate serious suicidal feelings and should be taken seriously.

**6. A person who attempts suicide and survives is unlikely to ever do it again.****MYTH*****Talking Points:***

A previous suicide attempt is among the strongest predictor of future suicide attempts.

Recovering from a suicide attempt isn't just a physical health issue. Mental health treatment is needed to reduce the risk for another attempt.