

Volunteering

Middle School

High school



Intervention Overview

Volunteering benefits psychological wellbeing in two ways: by improving psychological resources, such as self esteem and self-efficacy, and by improving social resources and skills (Musick & Wilson, 2003). Volunteering will also benefit adolescents as they take on new social roles and combat emotional challenges (Kim & Morgul, 2017). It may also improve their civic engagement (Kim & Morgul, 2017). Youth who participate in frequent voluntary service report lower levels of depression and may be more likely to volunteer as adults. The social skills gained through volunteering can help students succeed in educational and occupational pursuits (Kim and Morgul, 2017).

Intervention Guide

Grade Level:	6th - 12th
Materials:	List of volunteer opportunities for students, if you decide to do a whole-class volunteering activity some costs may be involved for transportation, supplies, lunch, etc.
Duration:	Varies
Implementation:	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Provide students a list of information about potential volunteer opportunities and organizations.2. Invite and encourage students to volunteer throughout the school year or term.3. Help students overcome barriers for volunteering, such as transportation, scheduling, contacting the organization, etc.4. Help students find an opportunity that fits their skills and interests.

Does it work?

A study involving one hundred 10th graders from an urban public high school in Canada analyzed the effects of volunteering on cardiovascular disease. All participants completed assessments about their cardiovascular health and psychosocial wellbeing prior to volunteering and after 10 weeks. For this study, students volunteered in an after school program at a nearby elementary school for at least one hour a week. Activities included, "homework club, sports programs, science, cooking, cards and games, and arts and crafts" (Schreier, Schonert-Reichl & Chen, 2013, p.328). Results of this study indicate that, in addition to reducing negative emotions, volunteering can, "change risk markers for cardiovascular disease" (Schreier, Schonert-Reichl & Chen, 2013, p.330). The greater a participant's reported increase in empathy and altruistic behavior, the greater reported cardiovascular benefits.

Hamilton and Fenzel (1988) studied 84 adolescents (ages 11-17) who participated in different volunteer projects through community service organizations and afterschool programs. Following the completion of the program, participants expressed more positive attitudes regarding social responsibility and the desire to help those in need. Students also shared that the volunteer experiences allowed them to learn more about others in their communities. Nearly all participants reported that they enjoyed the activities and would volunteer again in the future (Hamilton & Fenzel, 1988).

References:

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