Extemporaneous Health Poster
Sample Topic

Buddy Benches

In July 2019, pre-COVID 19, Swiss research concluded that social isolation was strongly connected to negative health outcomes, particularly depression and anxiety, in young people. Even before COVID-19 changed all our lives, childhood bullying and exclusion were prevalent, especially in our schools. Recommendations to reduce these negative outcomes include teaching strategies for resiliency.

Inclusion means that all people, no matter their abilities or disabilities have a right to be respected and appreciated as valuable members of their communities. A program out of Germany called Buddy Benches is trying to do just that. Buddy Benches are actual benches on school campuses that invite students to help classmates in need. If someone is new to a school, looking for a new friend, or just wanting company while their friends are absent, they can sit on the Buddy Bench. When classmates see someone sitting on the Buddy Bench, they can make a new friend, join a different friend group, or fill in as a friend for a day. These benches are designed to eliminate loneliness at school, potentially reducing feelings of depression and/or anxiety for students who don't have anyone else to talk to right now.

Buddy Benches are currently being used on primary school campuses around the world, but their benefits can be felt by anyone using them. Several students have created fundraisers to build or purchase Buddy Benches for their schools, and so can you.

You have 5 hours to develop and upload a poster to Wufoo. The poster will educate your school / community on how to promote inclusion on your school campus using Buddy Benches, as well as the benefit to students of using them.

Hämmig O. (2019). Health risks associated with social isolation in general and in young, middle and old age. *PloS one*, *14*(7), e0219663. https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0219663

Treetop Products (2019). Buddy bench benefits. *The Bench Factory*. https://www.thebenchfactory.com/buddy-bench-benefits