



Opening
Minds

MENTAL HEALTH
COMMISSION
OF CANADA

The Inquiring Mind™

Youth

Workbook



Overview

UNIT 1: What's Happening?



Mental Health and Youth

- Benefits of getting help
- Why don't we seek the help?

UNIT 3: Helping Out – What You Can Do



Caring for Yourself and Others

- Healthy ways to talk about suicide
- Help seeking - safe adults and other resources

UNIT 2: When is Help Needed?



Signs of Concern

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- Changes in mood and behaviours

UNIT 4: Coping Strategies



Building Resilience

- Helping others
- Helping ourselves

UNIT 1:

What's Happening?

Mental Health and Youth

Definitions:

The World Health Organization defines **mental health** as:

- a state of mental well-being that enables people to cope with the stresses of life, realize their abilities, learn well and work well, and contribute to their community
- a basic human right
- more than the absence of mental disorders, It exists on a complex continuum, which is experienced differently from one person to the next, with varying degrees of difficulty and distress potentially very different social and clinical outcomes.



Other definitions:

Mental well-being - often used interchangeably with mental health. Both refer to a state of well-being which include emotions, feelings of connection to others, thoughts and feelings, and being able to manage life's highs and lows.

Good mental health - reflects a positive approach to life; stressful events can be challenges, not difficulties. Helps maintain healthy relationships and make good choices.

Declining or poor mental health - mental health starts to decline but is not a diagnosable mental illness. Changes in mood, attitude and physical health can be experienced. The ability to cope with stressful events may be impaired.

Mental health problem - a broader term including both mental health-related illnesses and symptoms that may not be severe enough to warrant the diagnosis of a disorder.

Mental illness (or mental health disorder): A formal diagnosis from a mental health professional (e.g., physician, psychologist). The person diagnosed has difficulties in thinking, mood and/or behaviour associated with substantial distress and general dysfunction.

Stressors - something that can cause stress for someone, e.g., a big test at school

Stigma - negative attitudes and beliefs that cause people to fear, reject, avoid and discriminate against people with mental illnesses.

Cisgender - a person whose gender identity matches their sex assigned at birth.

People with mental illnesses often say that the stigma they experience is worse than the illness itself. Stigma prevents people with mental health problems from seeking the help they need.

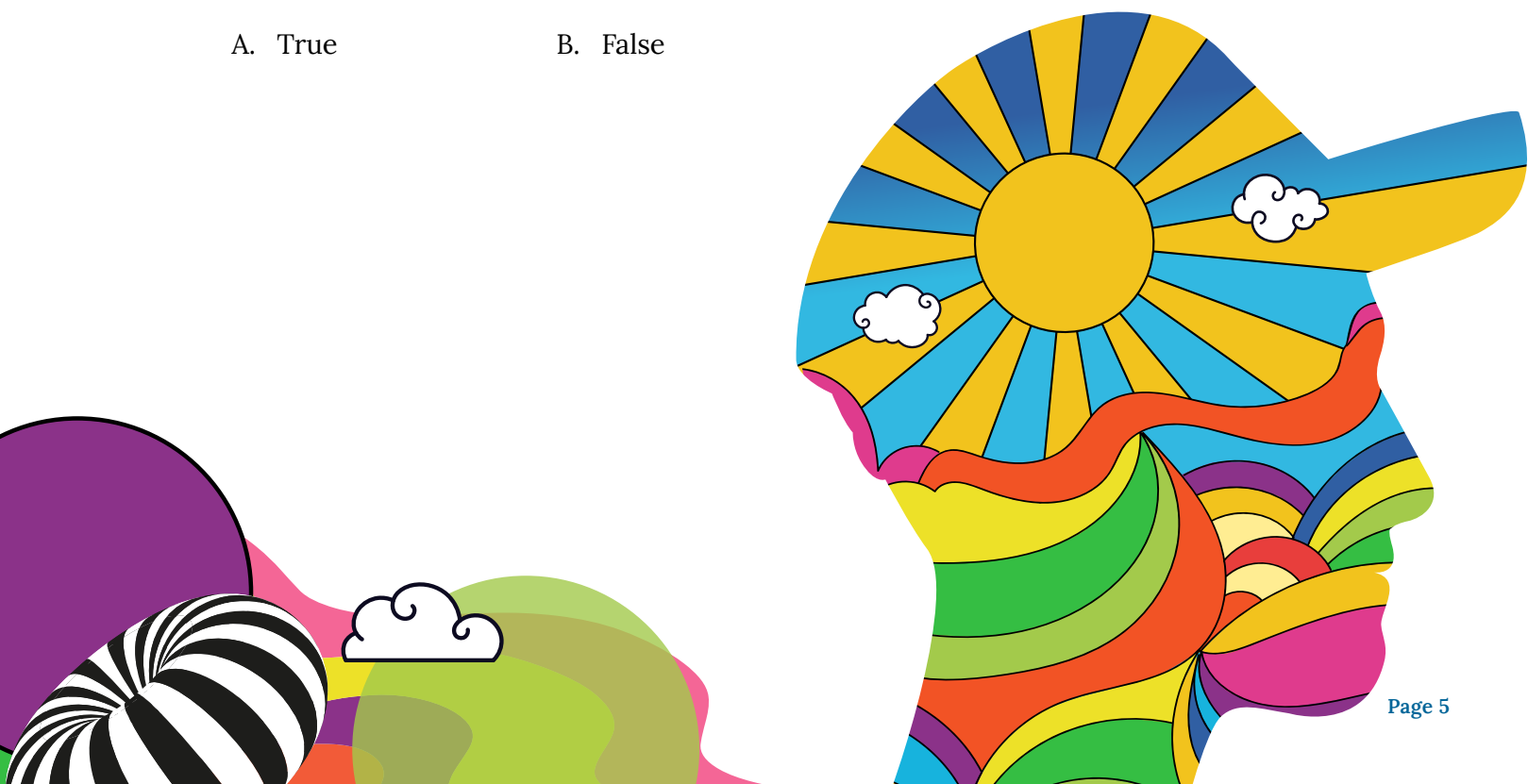


What's Happening?

Youth Statistics Quiz

Mark the correct answer. It will be shared on the screen.

1. What percentage of persons living with a mental illness see their symptoms begin before age 18.
A. 25% B. 33% C. 59% D. 70%
2. What is the second leading cause of death among youth?
A. car accident B. suicide C. cancer
3. What percentage of youth have a mental illness in a given year?
A. 6% B. 12% C. 23% D. 31%
4. Only 1 of 4 youths with a mental illness gets the help they need.
A. True B. False
5. 2SLGBTQ+ students are diagnosed with depression or anxiety at a rate 2 times higher than their cisgender peers.
A. True B. False





Write one thing that you hear in the video that stood out for you about stigma.

Examples of stigma

What might you ***think*** when partnered in class with someone living with a mental illness?

How might you ***feel*** when partnered in class with someone living with a mental illness?

How might you ***act*** when partnered in class with someone living with a mental illness?

Language Matters

The following excerpt from the Mental Health Commission of Canada's "Language Matters" brochure identifies respectful alternatives to stigmatizing phrases.

Stigmatizing	Respectful
It drives me crazy .	It bothers/annoys/frustrates me.
This is nuts .	This is interesting/strange/peculiar funny .
This individual suffers from depression.	They live with/are experiencing depression.
Mentally ill or insane person	Person living with a mental health problem or illness
Committed suicide, successful suicide	Died by suicide
Failed or unsuccessful suicide attempt	Attempted suicide
Substance abuse	Substance use or substance use disorder
Everyone who is a junkie ...	Everyone who uses substances ...
They used to be an <i>addict</i> .	They are in recovery .

https://mentalhealthcommission.ca/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/language_matters_cheat_sheet_eng.pdf



Reflection: I am most likely to challenge stigma by...

UNIT 2:

When is Help Needed?

Signs of Concern

Mental health concerns if identified and treated early can be temporary and reversible.

The **Mental Health Continuum Tool** can help you check in on emotional and physical concerns for yourself and others. You will find the interactive Mental Health Continuum Tool at this link : <https://learn.openingminds.ca/tim-youth-continuum-self-check/>



VIDEO: Signs of Concern and Getting Help

Write down any signs and indicators you heard the youth describe in the video.



The Youth Mental Health Continuum

As you move from the left (green) toward the right (red) of the Continuum, you may notice changes in each of these areas. The dotted lines across the four colour zones indicate that some people may experience a linear progression (i.e., from regular-occasional-frequent to excessive) from healthy to ill but not everyone will experience it this way.

This is not a one-size-fits-all tool so everyone will experience these changes differently.

	HEALTHY	REACTING	INJURED	ILL
Changes in Mood	Calm/Content	Occasional nervousness	Feelings of anxiety	Excessive anxiety/panic
	Self-confident	Occasionally experience self-doubt, and sadness	Loss of self-confidence, persistent sadness	Feelings of depression, numbness, or apathy
	Healthy Mood Changes	Irritable/Impatient	Frequent feelings of anger	Severe anger and rageful feelings
Changes in Thinking and Attitude	Good sense of humour and optimistic	Change in your typical sense of humour	Frequent inappropriate and/or no sense of humour	Severe pessimism and hopelessness
	Healthy attitude and thinking patterns	Occasional focus on negative thoughts	Frequent focus on negative thoughts	Obsessive focus on negative thoughts and/or suicidal thoughts
	Can concentrate and focus on tasks (homework, reading a book, job tasks, home chores)	Occasionally distracted or losing focus	Frequently distracted or losing focus	Unable to concentrate, difficulty thinking or loss of memory
Changes in Behaviour and Performance	Able to cope and handle demands or priorities	Some difficulty and/or procrastination	Frequently unable to cope	Feeling totally overwhelmed or unable to function
	Healthy physical activity and socializing with friends/family	Decreased physical activity and socializing	Often avoid physical activity and socializing	Isolate or withdraw from physical activity and socializing
	Completes tasks (schoolwork, work tasks, and/or extra-curriculars)	Some difficulty completing tasks	Frequent issues completing tasks	Unable to complete tasks
Physical Changes	Physically present and engaged (school, work, home, and social activities)	Present but less engaged	Frequently absent, or not engaged	Absent from school, work, home, and social activities
	Healthy sleep patterns	Occasional trouble sleeping	Frequent trouble sleeping	Unable to fall/stay asleep
	Healthy appetite	Some change in appetite	Frequent change in appetite and/or noticeable weight change	Excessive change in appetite and/or drastic weight change
Changes in Substance Use and Addictive Behaviours	Feeling energetic	Occasional lack of energy	Frequently tired	Always physically exhausted
	Good personal hygiene	Occasional neglect	Frequent neglect	Unable to maintain hygiene
	No engagement with substances (alcohol, smoking, vaping, cannabis)	Experimenting with substances	Increased engagement	Unable to control use of substances
	Responsible engagement (gaming, social media use, shopping)	Increased engagement	Struggle to control engagement	Unable to control engagement
	No negative impact on areas of life (school, health, finances)	Occasional negative impact	Frequent negative impact	Serious negative impact

ACTIONS TO TAKE

All good. Continue practicing self-care.	Check in... be aware!	Definitely talk to an adult about what's going on.	Get help NOW! This is serious.
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Read your assigned scenario. Using the continuum on page 9 or the pocket card, decide where they might be on the continuum: green, yellow, orange or red.

Using the Continuum

Scenario 1: Anne used to post TikTok videos for fun. A month ago, she received some rude responses to one of her videos and she's been really upset ever since. She always brings up the rude responses whenever you are talking with her. Anne used to be engaged with school, and her soccer team, but for the last month she is frequently having trouble keeping up with homework and is often late for soccer practice – sometimes, she doesn't even show up at all. You have noticed that she can be quite irritable and upset at times, and she is spending a lot more time on social media than usual. Where is Anne on the Continuum?

Answer:

Given where you've placed this person on the continuum, what actions should they take?

Scenario 2: Harik arrived late for class today, and when you waved at him to say hello, he frowned and looked away. After class, Harik said he didn't feel like joining your group of friends in the cafeteria for lunch, and instead he is going to the library to catch up on some reading. He seemed really irritated when your mutual friend Jose asked if everything is alright. Where is Harik on the Continuum?

Answer:

Given where you've placed this person on the continuum, what actions should they take?

Scenario 3: Sasha has come out as non-binary and is experiencing bullying from other teens. They have told you that they are so tired they can't even get out of bed some mornings. Sasha has also shared with you that they feel like they can't do anything right and are so overwhelmed that they don't want to socialize with friends at all. You've also noticed that they barely eat their lunch and are losing weight. Where is Sasha on the Continuum?

Answer:

Given where you've placed this person on the continuum, what actions should they take?



Reflection: Write down a change you noticed that could indicate moving from green to yellow.

UNIT 3: Helping Out – What You Can Do

Caring for Yourself and Others



VIDEO: The Language of Suicide

Write down one or two important points you heard/saw in the video:

Resources Brainstorm

Resources at School

Resources in the Community

Safe Adults



Remember:

- It's OK to talk about suicide and ask if someone is thinking about it.
- Go to a safe adult for help.
- If you are not comfortable talking to an adult you know and trust, you can contact Kids Help Phone: <https://kidshelpphone.ca>

Help decrease stigma by not sharing jokes about suicide either in person or online.



Reflection: Answer the reflection question on the slide here.

UNIT 4: Coping Strategies

Building Resilience

The 4 Coping Strategies:

- Deep Breathing
- Positive Self-talk
- Mental Rehearsal
- SMART Goal Setting



VIDEO: Coping Strategies

We all have different strategies that we use to manage stress.

What strategies did you hear the youth in the video use to manage their stressors?

Your Stressor

Write down a stressor that you experienced recently.



Deep Breathing

- Delivers oxygen to the brain
- Calms the body and mind
- Relaxes the central nervous system
- Improves performance

Positive Self Talk

Replacing the negative things you say to yourself with positive messages gives you confidence and improves your state of mind.



Write a positive reframe statement on the right for the negative self-talk on the left.

Negative phrase

That test was so hard. I'm sure I failed it.

My friend hasn't texted me back. She must be upset with me.

I'm not going to get any better at this!

I'm so out of shape. I'll never be able to do a 5K.

Sure, I got an A on the exam but I missed the easiest question.

My music teacher never smiles at me. She hates me.

Replace with...?

Yes, it was tough but there's no way to know if I failed it or not yet. I usually do pass so I'm probably ok.

Mental Rehearsal

Mental Rehearsal is practicing doing something in the mind before doing it in real life. You mentally prepare yourself for “what ifs” by predicting possible problems and working out a solution in advance. The more we practice something mentally, the easier it will be when we have to do it for real.



Reflection: What situation would you use mental rehearsal to help prepare you?

SMART Goal Setting

Specific — Goals must include a specific behaviour or action by you. You can't make goals for others.

Measurable — You have to be able to see progress. If you can't measure it, you can't know when you've achieved it.

Attainable — Goals must be possible to achieve.

Relevant — Goals need to be relevant and motivate you; they must be either desirable or necessary. You must either want it or need it.

Time-bound — You must know when you will achieve your goals.

From “Your Stressor” on page 13, write a goal that you can work towards to help cope with that stressor.

Make it a SMART Goal!

Specific – What exactly do you want to accomplish? What specific actions or behaviours will help you do this?

Measurable – How will you measure your progress?

Attainable – Is it concrete and possible for you to do it?

Relevant – Is it something you really want? Are you motivated?

Time-bound – By when do you want to do this?

With a partner tell Ali how to apply all 4 coping strategies to their scenario.

Scenario:

Ali enjoys going to school, participating in several clubs and socializing with friends. Ali is also learning to play the guitar.

Last week, Ali was asked to deliver a presentation about the school's chess club to the whole school during an assembly in two weeks' time. Since then, Ali has been feeling very nervous and irritable as they are worried about doing a good job.

How can Ali use the Big 4 to cope with their stress and deliver a great presentation?

In summary:

- Mental health is just as important as physical health
- Pay attention to the signs and symptoms on the continuum
- Practice the coping strategies
- Learn about the resources in your school and community and how to access them
- Remember that you can get back to the “green” and develop skills to stay there.



