

stop wondering, start knowing

A MENTAL HEALTH SCHOOL VIDEO RESOURCE



BC MENTAL HEALTH
& SUBSTANCE USE SERVICES

An agency of the Provincial Health Services Authority



BRITISH
COLUMBIA

Stop Wondering, Start Knowing: Facilitation Guide

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Developed by

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For more information about this resource please contact info@mindcheck.ca

A product of **mindcheck.ca**

mindcheck.ca is a teen and young adult focused interactive website where visitors can check out how they're feeling and connect to support early and quickly.

mindcheck.ca is early intervention focused, designed to help youth to be aware of changes in their thoughts, feelings and behaviours that may indicate possible emerging mental health challenges. The goal of **mindcheck.ca** is to enable youth to identify mental health challenges early on and to take action to prevent them from becoming more serious.

Acknowledgements

Project Managers

Nicole Chovil, PhD, Coordinator, Projects and Initiatives, Child, Youth & Young Adult Mental Health & Substance Use Services, Fraser Health

Michelle Cianfrone, MPH, Project Manager, Health Literacy, BC Mental Health and Substance Use Services, An agency of the Provincial Health Services Authority

Meagan Colenutt, MPH, Project Manager, Health Literacy, BC Mental Health and Substance Use Services, An agency of the Provincial Health Services Authority

Charlene King, MPH, Project Manager, Health Literacy, BC Mental Health and Substance Use Services, An agency of the Provincial Health Services Authority

Kimberley Korf-Uzan, MPH, Project Manager, Health Literacy, BC Mental Health and Substance Use Services, An agency of the Provincial Health Services Authority

Special thanks to the advisory group members for their invaluable feedback and support in the development of this resource

Julie Collette, F.O.R.C.E Parent in Residence, Kelty Mental Health Resource Centre

Alexis Gunderson, Teacher, School District 57

Jennica Hague, MPH Practicum Student, Health Literacy, BC Mental Health and Substance Use Services, An agency of the Provincial Health Services Authority

Sarah Irving, F.O.R.C.E Youth in Residence, Kelty Mental Health Resource Centre

Dave MacKenzie, School Counsellor, School District 22

Brent Seal, F.O.R.C.E. Youth in Residence, Kelty Mental Health Resource Centre

Natalie Sorensen, Outreach Wellness and Learning Teacher and School Counsellor, School District 68

Theresa Temlett, School Counsellor, School District 43

Sandra Teves, Mental Health Educator, Speak Up Mental Health Literacy Education, Fraser Health Child, Youth & Young Adult Mental Health and Substance Use Services

Linda Wowk, Mental Health Educator, SPEAK UP Mental Health Literacy Education, Fraser Health Child, Youth & Young Adult Mental Health and Substance Use Services

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www.pointblankcreative.ca

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Introduction

Dear Teachers,

Welcome to *Stop Wondering, Start Knowing*.

Mental health is becoming a key topic in education, but it is a topic that is not always easy to discuss.

Stop Wondering, Start Knowing is designed to help you and your students:

- To better understand and be more aware of mental health
- To recognize the early signs of mental health challenges
- To reflect and share ideas about mental health
- To help decrease the stigma around mental health
- To learn about resources available for support

It is important that mental health challenges are recognized and dealt with at an early stage to prevent them from getting worse. You can have a major impact on how your students learn to deal with stressors and challenges by using this resource and encouraging discussion about mental health in the safety of your classroom.

The resource consists of a facilitation guide and 5 short videos (18 minutes total) that are connected to each section of the guide. The videos include an introduction to mental health, three interviews with youth who have experienced mental health challenges, and a “wrap up” video. These powerful and personal interviews feature real British Columbian youth sharing what it was like to experience and overcome mental health challenges, and how they manage their mental health now.

This facilitation guide includes:

- Background information
- Lesson Plan
 - Suggested discussion questions
 - Conversation guides
 - Optional activities
 - Handouts
- Links to additional resources
- Memo for Families

This resource is based on best practices. It was developed in consultation with mental health professionals, school professionals and youth. The resource was evaluated and the results showed that students improved their health literacy, specifically around the mental wellness continuum, understanding early signs and symptoms, wellness tools and where to go for resources and support. Also, there were changes in attitude that

Introduction

suggest that the resource helped in reducing stigma around mental health challenges for youth.

“Hearing kids talk about things I’ve had to deal with before. It reminds me that you’re not alone, others feel the same.”

“I liked how all the people had different stories about mental health.”

“I learnt a lot about different types of mental health challenges.”

The resource is flexible and may be used for one or multiple classroom sessions. There are extra activities included to extend learning about mental health. This resource is an introduction to the topic. You can find more information on mental health and substance use challenges and disorders at the end of this guide.

We strongly recommend that you use the resource in its entirety to ensure the best learning for your students.

Your main role is to facilitate discussion among students, to encourage and help them to actively reflect on the videos and learn from each other. Other than becoming familiar with these materials, no preparation time is required. You do not need to have any background knowledge or expertise in mental health.

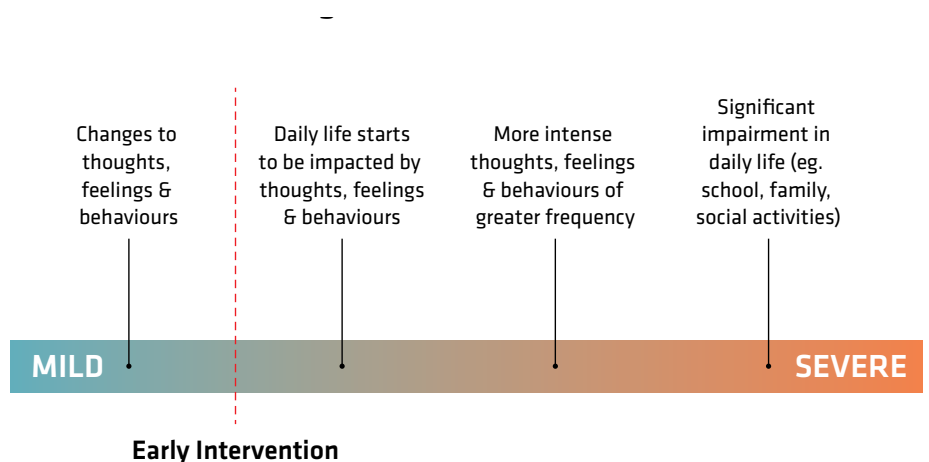
We do recommend that you inform fellow teachers and school counsellors that you will be using this resource so they can support students who may have questions or concerns afterwards. With this facilitation guide, videos, and your classroom facilitation skills, we can look forward to improving the mental health literacy of youth.

Mental Health 101

Mental health is defined in many ways but usually refers to our capacity to feel, think, and act in ways that enhance our ability to enjoy life and deal with the challenges we face. Mental health is an important part of our overall health and can range from a state of positive mental wellbeing to a state of disabling thoughts, feelings and behaviours. At any moment in time, our mental health is somewhere on this continuum.

Mental health challenges consist of changes to our thoughts, feelings, and behaviours (referred to as signs and symptoms) that affect our ability to function well. It helps to think of these changes as being on a continuum (see Figure 1). Mental health challenges can range from small changes in how we feel, think and act to those that are more intense, severe and of longer duration. When the symptoms last for long periods and begin to significantly impact a person's daily life, or to cause them distress, the person may be diagnosed with a **mental health disorder**. Some examples of mental health disorders are depression, anxiety disorders, psychosis and eating disorders. **Mental illness** is a general term that covers the wide range of mental health disorders.

Figure 1: Mental Health Challenges Continuum



Source: Healthy Minds, Healthy Youth: SpeakUp Presentation, Child, Youth and Young Adult Mental Health and Substance Use Services, Fraser Health in partnership with Coast Capital Savings, 2013.

Mental Health 101

Most of us, at some point in our lives, will be touched either personally with a mental health challenge or we'll have family, friends or colleagues who experience challenges. There are many beliefs about why people develop mental health disorders. Scientific studies suggest that mental health disorders involve biochemical changes in the brain and other biological factors such as genetics. We also know that psychological, social and environmental factors can also affect our mental wellbeing.

Mental health and substance use challenges are the #1 health issue for youth in their teens and early 20s. It is critical to help youth better understand mental health so that mental health challenges are recognized and dealt with effectively.

Early intervention can:

- Prevent mental health challenges from getting worse
- Decrease the risk of more serious problems
- Reduce recovery time
- Reduce the burden of illness

The following statistics show how important it is to improve the mental health knowledge of youth:

- Half of all lifetime cases of mental health disorders begin by age 14 and 75% of cases begin by age 24 (Kessler, 2005)
- At any given time, 1 in 5 youth in BC will experience a mental health disorder serious enough to cause distress and affect their ability to function at home, at school and in their community (Waddell & Shepherd, 2002)
- Less than half of all youth in BC with a mental health challenge have accessed the mental health services that they needed in the past year (Smith et al, 2011)

Many youth are not aware of changes in their thoughts, feelings and behaviours that may be the beginning of a mental health challenge and where to go for help. We need to help them become more comfortable talking about mental health and to reduce the fear and stigma about mental illness. Then, they will be more likely to seek help when problems emerge. With better understanding and the right kind of support, youth and their families can successfully navigate their way through periods of poor mental health and go on to live meaningful lives.

When mental health is the focus of a class, the topic may trigger emotional reactions in students who may be struggling or have someone close to them who is struggling.

You may be someone a student turns to for help. You can support your students by listening to them, connecting them with a school counsellor or encouraging them to go to mindcheck.ca.

References

Kessler, R.C. et al (2005). Lifetime prevalence and age of onset distributions of DSM-VI disorders in the national, comorbidity survey replication. *Archives of General Psychiatry*, 62, 593-602.

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Waddell, C. & Shepherd, C. (2002). *Prevalence of mental disorder in children and youth: A research update prepared for the British Columbia Ministry of Children and Family Development*. Retrieved from: http://www.mcf.gov.bc.ca/mental_health/pdf/02a_cymh.pdf

Overview of Lesson Plan

SECTION 1: WHAT IS MENTAL HEALTH?

Learning objectives

- To understand what mental health is and why it is important to everyone

Play and discuss Video 1: What is Mental Health?

This video was filmed at the 2014 Balancing Our Minds conference. Youth and mental health experts were asked one simple question: “What is mental health?” The video shows that people define mental health in different ways, but that most of those definitions are part of a “wellness continuum”.

SECTION 2: RECOGNIZING MENTAL HEALTH CHALLENGES AND ACHIEVING MENTAL WELLNESS

Learning objectives

- To be able to identify early signs and symptoms of mental health challenges
- To be able to identify positive strategies that support one’s mental health

Play and discuss Videos 2, 3 and 4: Interviews

Maddy’s Story: Body image and anxiety

Maddy had a very difficult time during puberty. She was paralyzed by anxiety and insecure about her body and the changes her body was going through. School, violence at home, emotional abuse, and more were all too much for a young girl to face alone. With the help of counsellors and others, Maddy was able to reach out for help and start talking about her challenges.

Now 15 years old, she is talking about her story with friends and people who might benefit from it. This helps her to accept things she can’t change and take control of the things that she can.

Alex’s Story: Anxiety and stress

Alex didn’t have serious mental health challenges in his early teens, but when he moved to Canada from Iran in grade 11 he started to struggle. Things came to a head when he started university. Alex was under intense pressure to succeed in a program that he wasn’t passionate about. Also, he was still adjusting to living in a new country without his friends and family. He began to have panic attacks for the first time in his life.

Overview of Lesson Plan

The panic attacks were a wake-up call for Alex. After he learned what a panic attack was he looked for resources to support his mental wellness. Alex worked with a professional counsellor, learned more about mental health and found a better social circle. He began to understand how his mind and body are connected, and how he can take a more active role in creating a happy life for himself.

Natasha's Story: Depression and substance use

In her early teens, Natasha felt alone and isolated from her family. She became depressed and started to misuse alcohol and other drugs. Natasha didn't have the knowledge to deal with depression and people around her said that ups and downs were just a normal part of growing up.

A counsellor and some small, simple steps of mindfulness helped Natasha out of her deep depression. Her life didn't change in an instant but medication, caring medical professionals and family members helped her along her journey to wellness one day at a time.

Now 18 years old, Natasha lives a fulfilling life and uses a number of strategies to maintain her mental wellness. She has learned to reach out to friends and family when she's feeling down and to stay away from parties and other places where there are lots of drugs or alcohol. She also takes plenty of what she calls "me time".

SECTION 3: TALK AND TAKE ACTION

Learning objectives

- To understand the importance of talking about mental health
- To have some basic strategies for helping a friend who may be struggling
- To know how to find mental health resources and supports

Play and discuss Video 5: Wrap Up

In this video, Natasha, Maddy, Alex and two other youth, Nadia and Connor, move from talking about their stories, to sharing some advice. These youth have overcome mental health stigma and have many insights they share with the audience. They bring up things students can do to help themselves and others such as talking to others, asking others how they are doing, and doing the quizzes on [mindcheck.ca](https://www.mindcheck.ca).

Section 1: What is Mental Health?

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- To understand what mental health is and why it is important to everyone

KEY MESSAGES

Mental health affects us all.

LESSON PLAN

Introduce the topic of the lesson to your students.

All of the youth in the videos have dealt with serious mental health challenges. They are examples of how people can experience significant challenges, but can recover and go on to live full, meaningful lives. They chose to be part of this resource so that other youth can learn what to look for and what they can do to prevent mental health challenges from getting to the point where significant professional help is needed.

The videos show how important it is to take action early. You will learn about mental health and the changes that indicate the beginning of a possible challenge. If caught early, these challenges can be dealt with by using some simple self-care resources. In other cases, professional help may be needed.

Before starting, it's a good idea to create a "community agreement" and "parking lot" with the class on the board or a flip chart. Post them during the lesson.

The "community agreement" is a list of rules made by the students to guide the discussion and help create a safe place for sharing (e.g. do not interrupt, listen, be non-judgmental, wait your turn, everything said here stays here, etc.). Ask students what they think should be included here.

The "parking lot" is a place for students or the teacher to write down important things that come up during the lesson that can't be discussed immediately. It's a way for students to feel heard without taking the lesson off track.

Discuss:

Mental health is something we generally don't talk too much about. Ask what comes to mind when you hear the term mental health? Why do you think many people don't talk about it? Ask your students to take a minute to think and share their thoughts with a neighbour. Now, let's hear what some other people are saying about it.

Section 1: What is Mental Health?

Pass out the Discussion Question Handout to students (photocopy the handout available on pages 21-22 of this facilitation guide). Encourage them to think about each of the questions as they watch the videos.



[Play Video 1: What is Mental Health?](#)



Discuss:

- How would you define mental health?

CONVERSATION GUIDE

There are many ways to define mental health and to different people, it can mean a lot of different things. Mental health generally refers to how we think and feel and how we deal with events in everyday life. It also relates to our ability to handle change, significant life events and stress. Poor mental health affects our ability to cope with and manage our lives and can decrease our ability to enjoy and participate fully in life.

It helps to think of mental health on a continuum that ranges from positive wellbeing at one end to extreme poor mental health at the other end. All of us will be somewhere on the continuum at any one time. Our mental health can fluctuate and is affected by what goes on in our lives and by how we take care of ourselves. We all have good and bad days, and positive and negative feelings. Mental health challenges can range from mild to severe, from temporary setbacks to longer ongoing problems.

Mental health is part of a person's overall health. This means there is no "health" without "mental health". Our mental health is a vital part of all of us, in our day-to-day lives and across our entire lifespan. Mental health is an important factor in how we cope with everyday life. Good mental health and wellbeing helps us to stay balanced, to enjoy life and cope with everyday stress and negative life events.

Section 1: What is Mental Health?

OPTIONAL ACTIVITY: Collaborative Drawing Exercise

Break class into small groups. Give each student a coloured felt pen and sheet of paper and ask them to draw what mental health looks like to them. After 30–60 seconds of drawing ask students to pass their paper to the person beside them, who will then build on the illustration. This continues until everyone has drawn on all papers. The last person to add to each drawing explains the finished work to the class.

The drawings could be used to make one large class poster titled “what is mental health?” Subsequent activities can also add to this poster, which could become a “graphic recording” of the lesson discussions and activities.

Section 2: Recognizing Mental Health Challenges and Achieving Mental Wellness

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- To be able to identify early signs and symptoms of mental health challenges
- To be able to identify positive strategies that support one's mental health

KEY MESSAGES

It is important to recognize when thoughts, feelings and behaviours are becoming too much to handle, and to identify the early signs and symptoms of mental health challenges. There are actions we can take to improve our mental health and different ways to cope with a mental health challenge.

LESSON PLAN



[Play Video 2: Maddy's Story](#)



Discuss:

1. What are some changes that Maddy noticed in herself when she was struggling with body image and anxiety, or that others might have noticed in her?
2. How does talking about her mental health challenges help Maddy?
3. What tools does Maddy use to recharge herself? What tools have you used in the past to recharge yourself?
4. In what ways and where did Maddy receive negative comments about her body? What else might affect how we feel about our body size/shape?

Section 2: Recognizing Mental Health Challenges and Achieving Mental Wellness



[Play Video 3: Alex's Story](#)



Discuss:

1. What signs and symptoms did Alex experience when he was having panic attacks?
2. What supports did Alex access when he was struggling? How were these supports helpful for Alex? Who are some adults a young person could turn to if they wanted to find out about support?
3. As Alex experienced, school can be a stressful. What are other possible sources of stress?
4. Alex describes a mind-body connection. In what ways can you take care of both your physical and mental health?



[Play Video 4: Natasha's Story](#)



Discuss:

1. What were some changes that Natasha noticed in herself when she was struggling with a depressed mood, or that others might have noticed in her?
2. What other changes might you notice in a friend or family member who is struggling with a mental health challenge?

Section 2: Recognizing Mental Health Challenges and Achieving Mental Wellness

3. Natasha did a number of positive things to keep herself feeling well when she was dealing with her depressed mood. What were some of these coping tools?
4. What supports might Natasha need in order to stay away from negative influences (eg. parties, certain friends, substances, etc.)?

CONVERSATION GUIDE

Signs and symptoms of mental health challenges

Changes in how you think, feel or behave can indicate that you may be developing a mental health challenge especially if the changes are troublesome and you can't seem to get back to your regular self. Some examples of these changes are:

- Trouble concentrating or making decisions
- Loss of interest or pleasure in activities
- Feeling numb or empty
- Problems sleeping; staying in bed all day long
- Ongoing tiredness and lack of energy
- Too much energy, a high mood with rapid shifts of rage or sadness
- Big changes in weight or appetite
- Disruptive or aggressive behaviour
- Withdrawal from friends and activities
- Excessive concern about social embarrassment or humiliation
- Extreme worry about routine life events/activities, more days than not
- Relying on alcohol or substances to help you escape from worries or problems
- Problems at school, work or in your relationships as a result of your drinking or substance use
- Thinking that if you lose some weight you will be happier
- Frequently going on diets
- Hearing, seeing, tasting, smelling or feeling things that are not there
- Family or friends are very concerned that you're not your usual self

These thoughts, feelings and behaviours can vary in intensity, from mild to severe. They may last for only a short period or continue over longer periods of time. If they are distressing, or continue for more than a short while, you should take action. This could include talking to a trusted adult or checking out the quizzes on mindcheck.ca to get a better idea of what's going on.

Tips for good mental health

To keep your mind healthy, it is also important to take care of your physical health. The way you eat, sleep and stay active can have a big effect on your mental health. Healthy routines can improve self-esteem, affect the way you think, and make it easier for you

Section 2: Recognizing Mental Health Challenges and Achieving Mental Wellness

to deal with stress. Social support from friends and family can also affect our mental health. Here are some basic strategies for achieving mental wellness:

- Eat well
- Be physically active every day
- Get enough sleep
- Find something you enjoy that helps you relax (getting outside, doing art, being creative, reading, meditation or mindfulness exercises)
- Take time to have fun
- Connect with friends, family, and other social supports
- Help others, give back, volunteer
- Develop good problem solving skills and goal setting skills
- Talk with someone and get help when you need it

OPTIONAL ACTIVITIES

Activity 1: Identifying Signs and Symptoms and Strategies for Promoting Mental Wellness

Provide students with sticky notes or small pieces of paper. Ask them to write down one sign or symptom of a mental health challenge on each piece of paper and focus on how that symptom can impact a person's life.

Ask the class to share what they have, and then post them on the board or flip chart, grouping similar responses together.

Next, ask students to write down strategies for promoting mental wellbeing, one per piece of paper. Ask the class to share what they have, and then post on the board or flip chart, grouping similar responses together.

Alternatively, these can be added to the “what is mental health?” poster under sections titled “what can mental health challenges look and feel like?” and “achieving mental wellness”.

A shorter way to do this would be to ask the same questions, but have students raise their hands and have one student write them on the board or poster.

Activity 2: Problem Solving and Goal Setting

Hand out and discuss the Problem Solving worksheet and/or the Goal Setting worksheet from **mindcheck.ca**.

<http://mindcheck.ca/promote/factsheets>

**Please note that handouts are updated regularly so, please check the mindcheck.ca website for the most current version of the handout.*

Section 3: Talk and Take Action

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- To understand the importance of talking about mental health
- To know basic strategies for helping a friend and how to find resources and supports

KEY MESSAGES

It is important to talk about mental health. Most mental health challenges begin during the teen and young adult years. It is important to seek help when needed, and know what resources and supports are available.

LESSON PLAN



[Play Video 5: Wrap Up](#)



Activity:

Instruct students to turn to a friend and role play how they might talk to a friend they are worried about.

- How would you start the conversation? (eg. Use “I” messages: I notice, I’m concerned, I see, I want, etc.).
- What might be helpful things that you could say to your friend if they were struggling?
- What are things you could do to support your friend?

Discuss:

1. What might have been different for Natasha, Alex and Maddy if they sought help earlier?
2. What are some key learnings and messages that you are taking away from this lesson?

Homework Activity:

1. Ask students to explore mindcheck.ca to learn more about:
 - Signs and symptoms of mental health challenges and disorders (depression,

Section 3: Talk and Take Action

anxiety, social anxiety, stress, psychosis, body image and eating , alcohol use, or drug use)

- Self-care resources
- How to get support
- How to support a friend

Suggest they also complete one of the **mindcheck.ca** quizzes

OR

2. Healthy Minds, Healthy Youth: A Speak Up Lesson Activity.

<http://mindcheck.ca/speakup/school-education>

The lesson activity helps students better understand mental health challenges and disorders by researching information on the **mindcheck.ca** website and sharing their learning through group presentations and discussions.

Provide handout: Youth Friendly Websites on Mental Health and Substance Use

(http://keltymentalhealth.ca/sites/default/files/youth_friendly_websites_on_mh_su_qrs_oct2013.pdf)

**Please note that handouts are updated regularly so, check the keltymentalhealth.ca website for the most current version of the handout.*

CONVERSATION GUIDE

We know it can be hard to open up about mental health challenges and that there are times when problems seem too big to sort out on our own. If you're feeling like this, then it's good to talk with someone about what's going on for you. It's often best to talk to an adult if you think you need more than just a shoulder to lean on, because they're likely to know more about services and supports in your community. It's up to you to decide who that person will be, it could be a parent, school counsellor, family doctor or another trusted adult in your life.

Friends can be the first to notice changes in other friends. Many youth turn to their friends if they are having a problem. Knowing how to support a friend is an important part of friendship, but it can be really tough to talk about personal stuff. All of us have probably experienced times when a friend seems to be struggling but don't know what to say or how they will react.

Section 3: Talk and Take Action

Some strategies for supporting a friend include:

- First, share with your friend what you have noticed and why it concerns you. Have this conversation in a comfortable, familiar but private place where the two of you can talk without any interruptions. You could say, “I’ve noticed you seem _____ (e.g. really down lately) and I’m worried for you. Is there something going on that you want to talk about?”
- Ask “How can I help or support you?” rather than jumping in with your own solutions.
- Don’t try to diagnose or second guess their thoughts or feelings. Your role is to be there, listen and offer support. Try not to make assumptions about what is going on for them.
- Be prepared that they may not want to talk about it at the time. Let them know you are there for them should they want to talk some other time.
- Don’t give up on the friendship. Stay in contact – even if they push you away. Give them time. Call them just to call them. Text them occasionally just to say you are thinking about them.
- Don’t promise to keep secrets, especially if your friend is talking about hurting themselves or wanting to end their life.
- Be prepared to hear information that may be upsetting. This can be hard to hear, so remember to take care of yourself.

If you are worried about a friend, you should let an adult know. They could help you figure out what resources and supports are available and what to do next. If you’re not comfortable talking to someone, there are places you can call (you don’t have to give your name) and some websites that offer online, email or text contact.

(See www.mindcheck.ca/get-support for more information)

Source: www.mindcheck.ca/friends

OPTIONAL ACTIVITY: Stand Up If You...

Have all students sitting in their desks. Ask them to stand up if the following statement is true for them, look around the class, and then sit down and discuss.

Stand up if you know someone who has experienced a mental health challenge.

Stand up if you think it is sometimes hard to talk about mental health. Why is it so hard to talk about? What would make it easier to talk about mental health?

Stand up if you think it is important to talk about mental health. Why? What can be done in the school to prevent and address stigma around mental health?

Stand up if you know where you can go for help or who you would turn to if you feel like you’re not doing well. Would anyone be willing to share? Any other ideas where you could go?

Stand up if you have ever been concerned about a friend who might be struggling. What were some signs they might be struggling or changes you notice in their attitudes or behaviours?

Stand up if you plan to reach out to a friend who appears to be struggling. What are some strategies you might take to support them, what can you say or do?

Handouts

FOR STUDENTS

Discussion Questions - pg 21-22

Youth Friendly Websites on Mental Health and Substance Use Quick Reference Sheet

Access at: <http://keltymentalhealth.ca/r/youth-friendly-websites-mental-health-substance-use-quick-reference-sheet>

mindcheck.ca Problem Solving Worksheet and Goal Setting Worksheet

Access at: <http://mindcheck.ca/promote/factsheets>

**Please note that handouts are updated regularly so, please check the mindcheck.ca and keltymentalhealth.ca websites for the most current versions of the handouts.*

FOR TEACHERS

Discussion Questions and Answer Key - pg 23-27

Discussion Questions

While you are watching each video, think about the discussion questions that go with it. There will be time to discuss these questions with the class at the end of each video.

Videos 2-4 feature youth who have lived experience with mental health and/or substance use challenges.

All of the youth in the videos have dealt with serious mental health challenges. They are examples of how people can experience significant challenges, but can recover and go on to live full, meaningful lives. They chose to be part of this resource so that other youth can learn what to look for and what they can do to prevent mental health challenges from getting to the point where significant professional help is needed.

The videos show how important it is to take action early. You will learn about mental health and the changes that indicate the beginning of a possible challenge. If caught early, these challenges can be dealt with by using some simple self-care resources. In other situations, professional help may be needed.

Video 1: What is Mental Health?

1. How would you define mental health?

Video 2: Maddy's Story

1. What are some changes that Maddy noticed in herself when she was struggling with body image and anxiety, or that others might have noticed in her?
2. How does talking about her mental health challenges help Maddy?
3. What tools does Maddy use to recharge herself? What tools have you used in the past to recharge yourself?
4. Where did Maddy receive negative comments about her body? What else might affect how we feel about our body size/shape?

Video 3: Alex's Story

1. What signs and symptoms did Alex experience when he was having panic attacks?
2. What supports did Alex access when he was struggling? How were these supports helpful for Alex? Who are some adults a young person could turn to if they wanted to find out about support?

Discussion Questions

3. As Alex experienced, school can be stressful. What are other possible sources of stress?
4. Alex describes a mind-body connection. In what ways can you take care of both your physical and mental health?

Video 4: Natasha's Story

1. What were some changes that Natasha noticed in herself when she was struggling with a depressed mood, or that others might have noticed in her?
2. What other changes might you notice in a friend or family member who is struggling with a mental health challenge?
3. Natasha did a number of positive things to keep herself feeling well when she was dealing with her depressed mood. What were some of these coping tools?
4. What supports might Natasha need in order to stay away from negative influences (e.g. parties, certain friends, substances, etc)?

Video 5: Wrap Up

1. What might have been different for Natasha, Alex and Maddy if they sought help earlier?
2. What are some key learnings and messages that you are taking away from this lesson?

Discussion Questions and Answer Key

Video 1: What is Mental Health?

1. How would you define mental health?

- Mental health has been defined in many ways but usually refers to our capacity to feel, think, and act in ways that enhance our ability to enjoy life and deal with the challenges we face
- Mental health can range from poor mental health to positive wellbeing, and all of us will be somewhere on the continuum at any given time
- We all experience good and bad days, and positive and negative feelings.
- Our mental health can fluctuate, and is affected by what goes on in our lives and by how we take care of ourselves

Video 2: Maddy's Story

1. What are some changes that Maddy noticed in herself when she was struggling with body image and anxiety, or that others might have noticed in her?

What she noticed in herself:

- She felt anxious and sad
- She started isolating herself
- She started comparing herself to her school mates (she felt all the other girls were prettier and skinnier)
- She disliked how she looked and felt like a “whale”
- She felt like a “car alarm”; extremely sensitive to day to day situations (e.g. dropping books in the hall)

What others noticed in her:

- She was moody
- Mom discovered that she was self-harming

2. How does talking about her mental health challenges help Maddy?

- She feels more connected to other people and less isolated
- She accepts herself
- She feels more relaxed and calm
- She can go to school
- She can now do things that interest her
- She realizes how strong she is

3. What tools does Maddy use to recharge herself? What tools have you used in the past to recharge yourself?

Tools Maddy uses:

- Talking with her family, friends and boyfriend
- Sharing her story

Other examples may include (but are not limited to):

- Music, acting, sports, poetry, humour, yoga, mindfulness techniques/meditation, etc.

Discussion Questions and Answer Key

4. Where did Maddy receive negative comments about her body? What else might affect how we feel about our body size/shape?

Maddy received negative comments from:

- Her father who told her she was ugly, fat, stupid, weak

Other examples that might affect how we feel about our body size/shape:

- Images of ideal body type in the media – tv, news, radio, movies, internet, etc.
- Friends/social circle, comparing our body size/shape to others
- Pressure to diet
- Low self-esteem
- Sports – needing to be fit

Video 3: Alex's Story

1. What signs and symptoms did Alex experience when he was having panic attacks?

- His legs were heavy; felt like there was a giant weight
- He lost his breath
- He felt very terrified and strange
- He felt like he was having a heart attack
- He felt isolated
- He had negative thoughts about himself

2. What supports did Alex access when he was struggling? How were these supports helpful for Alex? Who are some adults a young person could turn to if they wanted to find out about support?

Supports Alex accessed:

- Professional help/resources
- He felt an inner calling to change, to take control of his life

The supports were helpful because:

- He felt empowered
- He had new ways of thinking and different beliefs about himself
- He found the person he truly is

Examples of adults to turn to:

- Parent, teacher, counselor, coach, doctor, etc.

3. As Alex experienced, school can be stressful. What are other possible sources of stress?

- Family problems
- Girlfriend/boyfriend relationship problems
- Juggling a lot of responsibilities and/or activities
- Arguments with friends
- Being bullied
- Serious illness or health problems
- Major life changes e.g. moving, parents divorcing, etc.

Discussion Questions and Answer Key

4. Alex describes a mind-body connection. In what ways can you take care of both your physical and mental health?

- Sleep
- Healthy eating
- Meditation
- Mindfulness
- Exercise (running, walking, sports, etc.)
- Journaling
- Connecting to others
- Support groups

Video 4: Natasha's Story

1. What were some changes that Natasha noticed in herself when she was struggling with a depressed mood, or that others might have noticed in her?

- She isolated herself
- She stayed in her bedroom
- She was not talking to her family
- She often fought with her parents
- She started using alcohol, marijuana, and over the counter narcotics
- She felt like she was in a “freezer”; darkness, numb, not being able to talk or feel anything

2. What other changes might you notice in a friend or family member who is struggling with a mental health challenge?

- They don't seem to enjoy activities as much anymore
- They seem distracted or are having trouble staying focused
- They are unusually worried about things that don't seem to be a big deal to you or others
- Their eating habits have changed – they avoid hanging out at lunchtime or make excuses as to why they're not eating
- They are always tired or complain they aren't sleeping well
- They are missing more and more time from school or work
- They've increased how much they drink and/or use drugs
- They are sad much of the time and find it hard to see any positives in their life
- They are spending more time alone – don't want to hang out with friends or do any of their usual activities

Discussion Questions and Answer Key

3. Natasha did a number of positive things to keep herself feeling well when she was dealing with her depressed mood. What were some of these coping tools?

- Mindfulness
- Drawing
- Playing with her puppy
- Knitting
- Taking walks
- Meditation
- Yoga
- “Me” time
- Talking with family

4. What supports might Natasha need in order to stay away from negative influences (e.g. parties, certain friends, substances, etc.)?

- Create a support network of friends and family
- Setting goals
- Being regular with medication
- Avoiding parties with drugs and alcohol

Video 5: Wrap Up

Activity:

Instruct students to turn to a friend and role play how they might talk to a friend they are worried about.

How would you start the conversation? (e.g. Use “I” messages: I notice, I’m concerned, I see, I want, etc.).

Start by sharing with your friend what you have noticed and why it concerns you. Have this conversation in a comfortable, familiar but private place where the two of you can talk without any interruptions.

What might be helpful things that you could say to your friend if they were struggling?

- Use “I” messages (e.g. I notice, I feel...when I see, etc.)
- Ask them “what do you need from me?”
- Tell them that no problem is too big or too small to be significant
- Let them know that you are there to support them however way they need
- Ask them how they are doing (be specific)

Discussion Questions and Answer Key

What are things you could do to support your friend?

- Let them know you are here for them
- Stay connected
- Show them that you care- what can you do to show you care?
- Connect them to a caring adult
- Tell a caring adult that you are concerned
- Listen – what can you do to show someone you are listening?
- Ask them what they need
- Connect them to mindcheck.ca

Please refer to the For Friends section on mindcheck.ca for more information

<http://mindcheck.ca/get-involved/supporting-your-friend-through-tough-times>

1. What might have been different for Natasha, Alex and Maddy if they sought help earlier?

- Natasha may have not used substances and gotten along better with her family
- Alex may have been able to avoid panic attacks
- Maddy may not have self-harmed and had more self-confidence

2. What are some key learnings and messages that you are taking away from this lesson?

- Understanding that taking action early is key to preventing mental health challenges from getting worse
- Knowing that mental health is part of everyone's health
- Knowing that you are not alone
- Knowing how to support a friend
- Knowing there are resources that can help prevent issues from getting worse (e.g. self-care resources)
- Knowing that there are people who can help you

Resources for Teachers

mindcheck.ca

www.mindcheck.ca

A youth and young adult focused interactive website with quizzes, self-help tools, website links, and assistance in connecting to local professionals and resources across BC.

mindcheck.ca factsheets, sleep, goal setting, problem solving: <http://mindcheck.ca/promote/factsheets>

Kelty Mental Health Resource Centre

www.keltymentalhealth.ca

A provincial resource centre that provides mental health and substance use information, resources, and peer support to children, youth and their families from across BC.

Child and Youth Mental Health Resources: An Overview

http://keltymentalhealth.ca/sites/default/files/child_youth_mental_health_resources_-_an_overview_qrs_october2013.pdf

Healthy Minds, Healthy Youth: A Speak Up Lesson Plan

<http://mindcheck.ca/speakup/school-education>

Designed to be used in grade 10 planning classes, this resource was adapted from Fraser Health's high school Healthy Minds, Healthy Youth: A Speak Up Presentation. The lesson activity enhances students' understanding of mental health issues through researching the mental health information on the mindcheck.ca website and sharing learning through group presentations and discussions. Great for teachers who have not had an opportunity to build their own knowledge of mental health challenges and disorders.

School Resource Catalogue: Evidence Based Mental Health and Substance Use Classroom and Assembly Resources

<http://www.heretohelp.bc.ca/schools>

Produced by the BC Partners for Mental Health and Addictions Information, this catalogue provides information on BC Partners resources and lesson plans that school professionals can draw upon to both educate and assist students in matters related to mental health and substance use. An advisory committee of school professionals is involved in reviewing the materials.

Resources for Teachers

Tips for Good Mental Health

<http://www.heretohelp.bc.ca/factsheet/tips-for-good-mental-health>

A plain language fact sheet on wellness tips for promoting positive mental health, which can be used to supplement the discussion in Section 2 of this lesson plan.

Orientation to Child and Youth Mental Health Services: A Guide for Teachers

The F.O.R.C.E. Society for Kids' Mental Health

http://www.forcesociety.com/sites/default/files/CYMentalHealthGuide_Teachers.pdf

A mental health orientation guide for teachers. Designed for Surrey School District, but much of the information is relevant to all teachers. Information on mental health disorders that affect children and ways to support students with mental health challenges in the classroom.

The Mental Health and High School Curriculum Guide

www.teenmentalhealth.org/curriculum/

The only evidence based global mental health literacy resource designed for teacher application in grades nine and ten. The guide is completely web-based and includes teacher self-assessment/self-study; classroom ready lesson plans and materials; animated videos; PowerPoint presentations; and other supplementary resources. A teacher's training program on its use is available.

Transitions

www.teenmentalhealth.org/toolbox/

The only evidence based Canadian resource designed to assist students in the transition from secondary to post-secondary schooling. It is designed for application in grade 12 during the time that students are making their post-secondary schooling plans and for use in orientation packages for first year post-secondary students. It is available in a variety of forms including hard copy monograph; hard copy passport; ebook; and app for iPhone.

Family Pack

www.teenmentalhealth.org/toolbox/family-pack/

A comprehensive and evaluated set of resources meeting mental health literacy needs of families, including youth focused mini-magazines on specific mental disorders; parenting your teen; and teening your parent as well as specific resources for youth whose parent or sibling has a mental disorder.

TeenMentalHealth.org

www.Teenmentalhealth.org

A comprehensive and evidence based mental health literacy resource for teachers, parents, youth and health providers.

Making a Difference: An Educator's Guide to Child and Youth Mental Health Problems

<http://cymhin.offordcentre.com/downloads/Making%20a%20Difference%203-2.pdf>

A guide from the Child and Youth Mental Health Information Network (Ontario) designed to help teachers understand more about mental health problems in children and youth, to outline the steps they can and should take to help those students, and to give them some ideas on how they can talk about mental health problems in their classroom.

Supporting Minds: An Educator's Guide to Promoting Students' Mental Health and Well-Being

<http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/document/reports/SupportingMinds.pdf>

A guide that provides teachers with the information they need to support and assist students with mental health and substance use problems through early recognition and effective classroom strategies.

Children's Mental Health Ontario: Resources for Teachers

http://www.kidsmentalhealth.ca/professionals/mh_for_classrooms.php

A webpage that contains links to resources about common mental health problems present in today's classrooms, including anxiety and mood disorders, AD/HD, and behavioural disorders, and includes tips on early identification and intervention, practical suggestions on accommodating and responding to kids with mental health problems, and ways to combat stigma in the classroom.

Talking About Mental Illness: A guide for developing an awareness program for youth (Teacher's Resource)

http://www.camh.ca/en/education/Documents/www.camh.net/education/Resources_teachers_schools/TAMI/tami_teachersall.pdf

Information, support and tools for high school teachers to implement the lesson plan “Talking about Mental Illness” in their classroom, including practical ideas and suggestions for teaching about mental illness, lesson plans, and overheads.

The Jack Project

<http://www.thejackproject.org/resources>

A webpage that contains links to help students, parents and educators learn how to open up the conversation about mental health, and encourage youth to take care of themselves and their peers.

FREE MENTAL HEALTH APPS

MindShift

<http://www.anxietybc.com/mobile-app>

MindShift is an app designed to help teens and young adults cope with anxiety. It can help you change how you think about anxiety. Rather than trying to avoid anxiety, you can make an important shift and face it.

HealthyMinds

<http://healthymindsapp.ca/>

HealthyMinds is a problem-solving tool to help deal with emotions and cope with stresses you encounter both on and off campus. The goal: Keeping your mind healthy.

Other Free Mental Health Apps

<http://psychcentral.com/blog/archives/2013/09/20/top-10-free-mental-health-apps/>

If you're looking for good mental health apps, check out this list.

Memo For Families

Date:

Dear Parent/Guardian,

Re: *Stop Wondering, Start Knowing: a mental health school video resource*

I would like to let you know about a lesson that will be taught in your child's class called *Stop Wondering, Start Knowing*. It was designed to help increase student and school staff understanding of mental health. They will learn about the early signs and symptoms of mental health challenges and the resources and supports that are available. The aim is to increase discussion about mental health in school communities and decrease the stigma around mental health.

Why address mental health awareness?

Mental health challenges affect all Canadians personally or through a family member, friend, or colleague. 1 in 5 youth in BC will experience a mental health disorder serious enough to cause distress and affect their ability to function at home, at school and in their community. Most of these challenges can be dealt with effectively, especially if they are identified early.

Some of the topics in the lesson plan include:

- What is mental health
- What are signs and symptoms of mental health challenges
- How to achieve mental wellness
- How to support a friend
- The importance of getting help when needed
- Supports and resources available

We encourage you to talk with your teen about what they have learned about in class. Together you may want to explore **mindcheck.ca**, a website for youth and young adults. **mindcheck.ca** offers tools youth can use to check out how they're feeling and connect them to support early and quickly. The Kelty Mental Health Resource Centre is a great place for parents who are concerned that their child who may be struggling with a mental health challenge: keltymentalhealth.ca

Sincerely,

mindcheck.ca



**BC MENTAL HEALTH
& SUBSTANCE USE SERVICES**

An agency of the Provincial Health Services Authority



**BRITISH
COLUMBIA**