



Be Well: Guidelines for Selection of School-Based Mental Health Presentations and Activities

Vision

Achieving Excellence in Catholic Education through
Learning, Leadership and Service





Strategic Plan 2014 to 2017

Vision

Achieving Excellence in Catholic Education through
Learning, Leadership and Service

Strategic Priorities

- Ensure our structures, processes, relationships, and actions reflect our Gospel values and Catholic Social Teachings
- Implement the most effective, evidenced-based instructional and assessment practices to help all students meet the Catholic School Graduate Expectations
- Embed technology to support digital literacy, creativity, innovation, collaboration, and the learning needs of all students
- Develop the intellectual, spiritual, mental, physical, and emotional well-being of students in safe, diverse, respectful, and faith-filled learning environments
- Implement fair and transparent processes in recruitment, leadership, talent development, and succession planning to ensure our employees have the necessary knowledge, skills, and attributes to support our Vision



*Peterborough Victoria
Northumberland and Clarington
Catholic District School Board*



Be Well: Guidelines for Selection of School-Based Mental Health Presentations and Activities

Principals and staff may be approached or may seek out one-off presentations, videos, social media campaigns, or other written/web materials as part of school plans to enhance mental health awareness and literacy amongst students and staff. These guidelines are provided to support high quality activities while avoiding harmful outcomes. Staff may also consult the Mental Health Lead, the Board Psychologist, or their School Social Worker.

Mental health awareness and literacy activities include information/knowledge, skills, and beliefs that help school staff, students and/or parents and community members to reduce stigma, promote positive mental health, identify risk factors and signs of mental health and substance use problems, and promote help-seeking behaviours.

Essential Ingredients of a Mental Health Awareness & Literacy Activity

- ❖ Evidence-based
- ❖ Inclusive and culturally sensitive
- ❖ Provides follow-up support
- ❖ Part of a comprehensive plan; not a stand-alone activity
- ❖ Free of violent and disturbing content
- ❖ Aligned with school and board mental health initiatives
- ❖ Delivered in the appropriate format, time and day of the week

One-Time Presentations and Guest Speakers

Presentations from individuals with lived experience are a very powerful and effective strategy to increase awareness and reduce stigma. While tempting to have enthusiastic yet untrained students, parents or staff members share their story, **it is essential that speakers with lived experience be trained and supported through a professional speaking program, such as TAMI, to minimize risk for the speaker and audience.** www.TAMIdurham.ca

Why? Sharing personalized experiences with mental illness is demanding work and hearing about someone else's experience with a mental illness can be triggering. Trained speakers have honed their message to ensure that it is accurate and informative and that risky topics such as eating disorders, suicide and self-harming behaviours are talked about in safe ways to avoid triggering audience members who are at-risk. The experience of presenting may be stressful resulting in an increase in symptoms for the presenter who may require support. Additionally, trained speakers are not from within their own school community as speakers are at risk for increased stigma from some audience members, especially when presenting in their own school community.

Who? Positive mental health and mental health promotion presentations are suitable for all audiences and can be delivered in a large assembly. Presentations or videos that deal with specific mental illnesses should be delivered to smaller audiences to allow for dialogue and closer monitoring of student responses.

When? Avoid presentations and/or sessions on the last day of the week or at the end of the day as you will want to monitor students to determine who requires assistance and support.



Videos

Videos are a powerful method to increase awareness. Ensure that the video you are presenting has been produced/sponsored by a reputable organization and/or has been vetted by a mental health professional.

Why? Students producing biographical videos run the risk of over-identification of themselves with their illness and other risks (see one-time presentations above).

Who? Positive mental health and mental health promotion presentations and videos are suitable for all audiences and can be delivered in a large assembly. Presentations or videos that deal with specific mental illnesses should be delivered to smaller audiences to allow for dialogue and closer monitoring of student responses.

When? Avoid showing videos that deal with specific illnesses at the end of the week or at the end of the day as you will want to monitor students to determine who requires assistance and support.

See Appendix A for additional planning questions.

Social Media Campaigns

Social media campaigns that highlight mental health messaging or particular mental illnesses are common. School staff are advised to access support by a PVNCCDSB mental health professional to ensure that they are providing accurate information, de-stigmatizing, promoting help-seeking behaviours and providing information about high risk behaviours in safe ways.

Written Materials and Web Sites

There is an abundance of written materials and web sites dedicated to mental health. Only use materials from reputable professional organizations.

See Appendix B for a list of web resources.



Appendix A: Additional Planning Questions for Mental Health Programming

DATE	PROPOSED SPEAKER / EVENT / ACTIVITY / PRESENTATION / CAMPAIGN	
Features/Characteristics	Plan-Act Comments	Assess-Reflect Comments
<p>Alignment:</p> <p>How does this initiative support student learning? What are the goals (prevention, motivation, education)? How does this align with our school improvement plan and the board's Mental Health strategy? In what ways is the presentation culturally sensitive and inclusive?</p>	<p>What messages are being shared about positive mental health and high risk behaviours? Are these supportive messages or are they potentially activating to youth who are at risk?</p>	<p>What are our success indicators?</p>
<p>Credibility:</p> <p>What credentials does the presenter/website have? Has this presentation been delivered in other schools and what was their experience? Have other schools promoted/used this website and what was their experience?</p>	<p>Name and contact information of school that has previously had this presenter.</p>	<p>Would we recommend this speaker or video again?</p>
<p>Impact:</p> <p>Have we avoided Fridays and end of the day? What follow-up activities are planned to embed the learning acquired from the presentation? If we have a specific mental illness topic, are we providing this in small groups? Are we following Guidelines for Talking with Students About Suicide?</p>		<p>What learning objectives were achieved?</p>
<p>Support:</p> <p>Who is going to provide mental health back-up? How will we handle student distress and/or disclosures? How will we let students and parents know where they can seek help at school and in the community? How will we let staff know where they can seek help?</p>		<p>How many student disclosures occurred? Did students know who to go to for help? What would we need to change for the next time?</p>
<p>Communication:</p> <p>How will parents be notified of the presentation, and of the messages that will be shared so they can support their child?</p>		<p>Was our communication strategy effective and timely? What questions did parents have?</p>
<p>Cost:</p> <p>Are there any costs or obligations for the school (financial or other commitments)?</p>		<p>Was the cost justified?</p>

Please consult with your School Social Worker, the Board Psychologist or the Board Mental Health Lead when planning these types of activities and events.

Appendix B: Web Resources

Resources for Students

VAnxiety BC - www.anxietybc.ca

Kids Help Phone - www.kidshelpphone.ca

Mind Check - www.mindcheck.ca

Mind Your Mind - www.mindyourmind.ca

Teen Mental Health - www.teenmentalhealth.org

Resources for Parents and Families by Region

<http://www.pvnccdsb.on.ca/en/parents/resourcesParents.asp>

Resources and Toolkits for Schools and Educators

ABCs of Mental Health - <http://www.hincksdellcrest.org/abc/welcome>

Ever Active Schools - <http://www.everactive.org/>

Foundations for a Healthy School Ontario

<http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/healthyschools/foundations.pdf>

Mental Health: Hope Dignity and Our Compassionate Response Grade 9-10 Resource

<http://www.catholiccurriculumcorp.org/Units/MentalHealthfinalversion.pdf>

Leading Mentally Healthy Schools, A Vision for Student Mental Health and Well-Being in Ontario Schools

<https://dl.dropboxusercontent.com/u/6199808/LeadingMentallyHealthSchools.pdf>

Mental Health and Wellness for Catholic Schools

<http://www.eoccc.org/Content/Sidebar/FOV30001A0F4/S00239D61?FormID=96&both&listview>

Mindset Works - <http://www.mindsetworks.com/>

OPHEA Healthy Schools, Healthy Communities - <https://www.ophea.net/>

Psychology Foundation: Kids Have Stress Too Toolkit -

<http://psychologyfoundation.org/index.php/programs/kids-have-stress-too/>

Pan-Canadian Joint Consortium for School Mental Health Positive Mental Health Toolkit -

<http://www.jcshpositivementalhealthtoolkit.com/>

School Mental Health Assist - <http://smh-assist.ca/>

The Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning - <http://www.casel.org/>

Staff Mental Health

<http://www.mentalhealthworks.ca/>

www.manulife.ca

www.shepellfgi.com

<http://www.psychologyfoundation.org/index.php/resources/workplace-mental-health-brochures/>



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