

STUDENT HANDOUT GRADE 9-12

TALKING ABOUT MENTAL ILLNESS

Day 1 (Mental Health/Illness)

5 Characteristics of Mental Health

- Ability to enjoy life
- Resilience
- Self-Actualization
- Flexibility
- Balance

Facts:

- Mental illness affects 1 in 5 people
- Mental illness tends to begin in adolescence
- Mental illness is a real and treatable illness
- People with mental illness can recover

Diagnosed if:

- Last longer than 2 weeks
- Causes disability, distress or suffering
- You have at least 4 symptoms

Stigma/Causes/Getting Help

Stress, constant worry and feeling unhappy are the top three causes of psychological distress in youth.

Another word for **Stigma** = Stereotype
Stigma prevents people from getting help

Genetics, chemical imbalance, substance use and trauma are some possible causes of mental illness

Common warning signs include: Personality change, inability to cope with daily activities and/or abuse of alcohol and drugs, talking about suicide, withdrawal.

Get help by contacting your doctor, the Canadian Mental Health Association or 211 to find the service that is right for you.

Day 2 (Types of Disorders)

ADD/ADHD 5/100 people

3 major domains:
Inattention, hyperactivity, impulsivity

Eating Disorders 4/100 people

Anorexia: Severe restriction of calories, excessive exercise and refusal to maintain average body weight. Usually under 500 calories/day.

Bulimia: Binge eating and purging

Depression 10/100 people

Prolonged feeling of sadness
Higher risk for suicide

Bipolar Disorder 1/100 people

Constantly changing moods
Periods of depression followed by periods of mania
Typical cycle is from a few weeks to a few months

Schizophrenia 1/100 people

Characterized by hallucinations & delusions
Onset of symptoms males: 16-20
Onset of symptoms females: 20-30

OCD 2/100 people

Obsessions- Recurrent, intrusive thoughts
Compulsion- Repetitive behaviour
Most common obsessions: germs/symmetry/checking

Other Anxiety Disorder:

Generalized anxiety, social/specific phobias, separation anxiety, post-traumatic stress disorder, agoraphobia & panic disorder.



Recovery is possible
change the way you think!

Resources

- **211**
When you don't know where to turn
(free, confidential, 24/7)
- **Mental Health Crisis Line**
1-866-996-0991
- **Child, Youth & Family Crisis Line**
1-877-377-7775
- **Kids Help Phone**
1-800-668-6868



Canadian Mental
Health Association
Champlain East

Association canadienne
pour la santé mentale
Champlain Est

1-800-493-8271

**“Life isn’t about
finding yourself.
Life is about
creating yourself”**

Bernard Shaw



**“Know me as a person,
NOT by my mental
illness. It doesn’t define
me as a person”!**

**Mental health problems
can affect anyone.**

Day 3 (SuicideTALK)

About SuicideTALK

A program developed by “Living Works” to explore suicide awareness and prevention. Main goal is to talk openly about suicide and share the message that of us can make a difference.

Facts

- Approx. 4000 people die by suicide each year in Canada (1 million worldwide)
- For every one suicide there are 40-100 suicidal behaviours
- 1 in every 17 people thinks about suicide each year
- Talking about suicide does not hurt anyone... not talking about it does.

Warning Signs

Physical: Lack of interest in appearance, loss of appetite/weight, change in sex drive and disturbed sleep.

Actions: Give things away, withdrawal, loss of interest in everything, abuse of alcohol/drugs, reckless behaviour, and extreme behaviour changes.

Thoughts: “I just can’t take it anymore”, “I wish I were dead”, “My problems will be over soon”.

What can you do?

Tell: About your feelings of suicide or your suspicion of someone else’s thoughts of suicide

Ask: The person directly “Are you thinking about suicide” Mention what you have observed.

Listen: Without judging, let them talk about their reasons for suicide.

Keep Safe: Connect them with someone who can help (teacher, parent, professional, hospital or 911)

Day 4 (Stress Management)

What is Stress?

- Stress can be defined as one of the body’s responses to the ever-changing environment.
- It is the physical, mental, and emotional response people experience when under pressure.
- When stressful situations overwhelm us on a continual basis, stress can become harmful.

Facts

- Stress contributes to many life threatening illness such as: cancer and heart disease.
- Stress affects your immune system
- Stress accounts for 75-90% of all medical and psychological doctor visits.
- Laughing lowers stress hormones such as: cortisol, epinephrine and adrenaline.

Signs

- Headaches and stomach aches, heart palpitations, physical pain, eating problems, sleeping problems, tiredness, worry, fear, irritability, decreased concentration, difficulty making decision.

Reducing Stress

- Reduce or prioritize your obligations
- Balance work/leisure
- Ask for help when you need it
- Get enough sleep 8-10 hours
- Think positively!



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