

Presentations

Your Mind Matters

@yourmindmattersorg

Goal: to engage in conversations, raise awareness, educate about youth mental health, and provide tools, resources and support for youth struggling with mental illness.

A note to educators: our presentations share the same goal as our organization, as a whole. The three focuses of *Your Mind Matters* are: **science**, **stigma** and **support**. These presentations focus on exactly that. They are informative, engaging, help tackle stigma towards mental illness, and ultimately help youth (and their supporters) access mental health care and support for whatever it is they're going through. Mental illness or not, we ALL have mental health. It's something that needs to be taken seriously from a young age. Prevention and early intervention, when possible, is essential and much more effective than waiting until a crisis. Thank you for playing an active role in advocating for and supporting youth mental health. We sincerely hope that this is the start of a mental health revolution and we commend you for being part of it.

For more information, go to www.yourmindmatters.ca.

SCIENCE

STIGMA

SUPPORT

Topic: **Mental Health 101**

Summary:

We'll explore and define mental health, compare it to mental illness, and talk about how we can foster and maintain a sense of positive mental health, with or without a diagnosed mental illness.

Key Topics:

- what is mental health?
- coping with stress
- building resilience
- self-care
- checking in
- getting support

Structure:

approx. 1 hour lecture
opportunity for group discussion
worksheets and activities available
Q + A after

Mental Health



What is mental health?

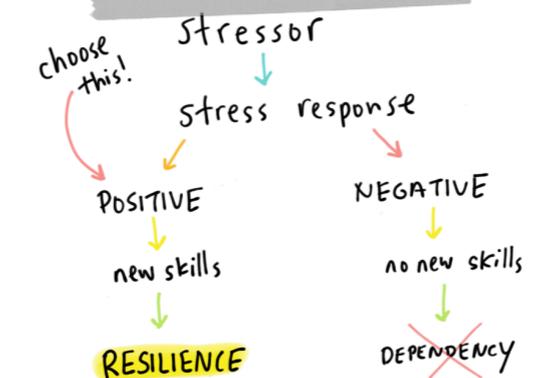
Healthy brain → mental health

Good mental function that allows you to adapt to challenges in life

Negative emotions are part of good mental health, but someone with good mental health can overcome and cope with these negative emotions better

Everyone has mental health

People can have good mental health and a mental illness simultaneously



Topic: **Stigma**

Summary:

We'll discuss the stigma that exists when it comes to mental illness, how it impacts individuals and society, explore myths and realities of mental illness, and finally, outline how we can reduce stigma.

Key Topics:

- what is stigma?
- impact of stigma
- myths and realities of mental illness
- how to reduce stigma

Structure:

approx. 30 min lecture

group discussion and activities

interactive component: myths or realities

'homework' assignment: famous people with mental illness

Q + A after

Key Points

- Stigma results in discriminatory behaviour and treatment towards people with mental illness
- The fear of stigma often prevents people from seeking help and treatment for mental illness
- Stigma is perpetuated through mistaken beliefs about mental illness, and can be seen in people's attitudes, in public policy, in the media, etc.
- Stigma can be reduced by providing accurate information about mental illness and its treatment



What's stigma?

A cluster of **negative attitudes and beliefs** that motivate the general public to fear, reject, avoid and discriminate against people with mental illness.

Stigma is not just a matter of using the wrong word or action.

Stigma is about **disrespect**.

It is the use of **negative labels** to identify a person living with mental illness.

Stigma is a **barrier**.

Fear of stigma and the resulting discrimination discourages individuals and their families from getting the help they need.



Myths and Realities of Mental Illness

MYTH

Mental illness is a sign of personal weakness

REALITY

Mental illness is a brain disorder and not a personal weakness.



Topic: Mental Health and Mental Illness

Summary:

We'll compare and contrast mental health vs. mental illness, and highlight the different levels of mental health problems, ranging from mental distress to mental health problem to mental illness.

Key Topics:

- mental health vs. mental illness
- levels of mental health
- the brain
- language used to discuss mental illness
- challenges of mental illness

Structure:

approx. 45 min lecture
opportunity for group discussion
activity on language
Q + A after

Key Points

- Everyone has mental health regardless of whether or not they have mental illness
- The brain is responsible for cognition, perception, emotions, physical functions, signaling (reactions to the environment) and behaviours
- Changes in brain function lead to changes in thoughts, feelings and behaviours that can last a short or long time
- A mental illness affects a person's thinking, feelings or behaviour (or all three) and causes that person difficulty in functioning



Mental health vs. Mental illness



The Relationship Between Mental States

Increasing severity ↓	No distress, problem or disorder	Pensive, thoughtful
	Mental distress	Upset, annoyed, sad, unhappy, disappointed, disgusted, angry, bitter, blue, down, sorry, disconsolate, distressed, despondent, dejected, pessimistic
	Mental health problem	Heartbroken, sorrowful, demoralized, grieving, mournful, despairing
	Mental disorder/illness	Depression



Mental distress vs. mental health problem vs. mental illness

Mental distress: inner signal of anxiety or "stress" when experiencing something difficult. Everyone experiences this everyday

Mental health problems: when a person is faced with a larger stressor than usual and deals with strong negative emotions and cognitive or behavioural difficulties. Support is needed, but it's not an illness

Mental illness: genetics + environment, medical condition that is diagnosed and treated by trained professionals using evidence-based treatments. The brain is not working as it should be, and significant, substantial and persistent challenges with emotions/feelings, cognition/thinking, physical and behaviour occur

A person can be in each of these states at the same time

Topic: **Mental Illness 101**

Summary:

We'll go in depth about mental illness, talking about the causes, symptoms, treatment, etc. Here, you'll learn more about the most common mental illnesses that affect youth. Consider it a crash course on mental illness.

Key Topics:

- what is mental illness?
- mental health vs. mental illness
- common mental health disorders
- symptoms and treatment

Structure:

approx. 1 hour lecture

opportunity for group activity

information handouts provided on each illness covered

Q + A after



Generalized Anxiety Disorder

Not just nerves.
Excessive anxiety and worry that has no clear purpose and occurs for an extended period of time, causing emotional distress. This leads to physical symptoms and causes functional impairment.

Feels like...

- Excessive anxiety
- Worry
- Fear
- Tense
- On guard

Looks like...

- Increased heart rate
- Sweating
- Shaking
- Shortness of breath
- Muscle tension
- Thinking about potential sources of anxiety
- Stomach upset
- Avoiding feared situations
- Self-medicating with drugs or alcohol
- Difficulty concentrating on anything else

TREATMENT

Psychotherapy, like Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) and Mindfulness-Based Cognitive Therapy (MBCT)
Medication (anti-anxiety)

Key Points

- A mental illness changes many aspects of a person's life (cognition, perception, emotions, physical functions), signaling (reactions to the environment and behaviours) and causes that person difficulty in functioning
- Mental illness describes a broad range of conditions (the type, intensity, and duration of symptoms of mental illnesses vary)
- The exact cause of mental illnesses are not known, but most experts believe that, like with other illnesses, a combination of biological and environmental factors are involved
- Like illnesses that affect other parts of the body, mental illnesses are treatable, and the sooner people receive proper treatment and supports, the better the outcomes
- With a variety of supports, most people with mental illness recover and go on to lead fulfilling and productive lives

Topic: **Getting Help**

Summary:

We'll discuss how you or someone you know can get help if they're struggling with a mental illness, or symptoms of one. By the end of this presentation, you'll know where to go and what to do and be on your way to receiving support and feeling better.

Key Topics:

- where to go
- who to talk to
- numbers to call
- where to learn more
- building your mental health team

Structure:

approx. 30 min lecture
resources and information provided
question period after

Getting Help 101

- Talk with supportive friends and family. Share your feelings with them and let them be part of your team.
- Talk to your family doctor. They are a great resource and can link you to other professionals, if needed.
- Connect with community mental health clinics or organizations like **Your Mind Matters** (YMM) or the Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA) for information, support, and services.
- Call a help line. Some organizations also offer support online or through text messaging.
 - Kids Help Phone: **1-800-668-6868**
 - York Region Crisis Line: **1-855-310-COPE**
 - Good 2 Talk: **1-866-925-5454**
- Learn more about mental health (www.yourmindmatters.ca)
- Connect with others who have personal experience with a mental illness and learn more about their recovery journey
- Attend workshops and education sessions hosted at community centres, agencies, schools, colleges or universities (or **YMM**)
- Talk with a member or leader you trust from your faith or cultural group



Key Points

- Mental illnesses, like chronic physical illnesses, can be effectively treated
- Stigma acts as a barrier to people seeking help for mental illness
- Getting help early increases the chances that a person will make a full recovery from mental illness
- Recovery from mental illness is possible when a range of evidence based treatments and supports are available
- There are many different things a person can do to seek help



Topic: Importance of Mental Health

Summary:

We'll convince you just how important mental health is, and discuss it's benefits and how we can ensure we maintain positive mental health (for the most part).

Key Topics:

- the stress response
- healthy coping strategies
- activities for stress reduction and better mental health

Structure:

approx. 30 min lecture
lots of worksheets and activities available
Q + A after

Key Points

- Everyone has mental health even if a person has a mental illness
- Learning what the stress response is and how to use it can help a person better adapt to life and develop resilience
- Strategies that we use to develop good mental health are very similar to those we use to develop good physical health



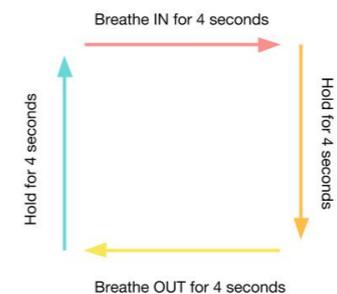
Checking In With Yourself

Read each statement and consider whether you agree or disagree

Sense of self	Purpose and sense of meaning	Belonging
I feel confident about my own opinions, even if they're different from what other people think or believe. I think people respect me, but I can disagree with others and still feel ok about myself. I feel that I am the expert on my own life. I consider myself to be a good person. I deserve to feel well.	I feel like I'm reaching my potential. I feel I am growing as a person. I challenge myself and my thoughts about the world. I have a sense of purpose and meaning in my life. It is a better world with me in it. I am good at things that matter to me. I get something out of the things I do.	I get along with others, and I feel good about my personal relationships and social interactions. I feel like I am part of something bigger than myself. I feel like I belong. I have people in my life to support me.



Box Breathing Exercise



Topic: Supporting Someone

Summary:

We'll discuss how we can support someone with a mental illness, or who is struggling with their mental health. This includes tips on how to talk to them, comfort and support them, and guide them to get the proper help and support from a professional.

Key Topics:

- how to be supportive
- language to use and not use
- steps you should take after
- reminder: you do not have to fix them

Structure:

approx. 45 min lecture
opportunity for group discussion
worksheets and activities available
interactive and role playing activities
Q + A after

Supporting Someone with a Mental Illness

DO

- Listen without judgment
- Express sympathy, encouragement and support
- Help them find resources
- Know your role and have realistic expectations of yourself within it
- Take it seriously
- Keep in contact with them and check in
- Encourage them to seek help

DON'T

- Say "Be strong," "Don't cry," "Focus on the positives!" or "Be grateful for what you have."
- Be afraid to ask if they're suicidal
- Minimize what they're going through and don't tell them you know exactly how they feel
- Go MIA or give up on them (without talking to them about it first)
- Compare your struggles to them
- Take it personally
- Judge them or stereotype them
- Neglect yourself in the process

Supporting Someone with a Mental Illness

WHAT HELPS

- I know you have a real illness and that's what causes these thoughts and feelings
- I may not be able to understand exactly how you feel, but I care about you and want to help
- You are important to me. Your life matters
- Tell me what I can do now to help you
- You might not believe it now, but the way you're feeling will change
- You're not alone in this. I'm here for you
- Talk to me. I'm listening
- I am here for you. We will get through this together

WHAT HURTS

- It's all in your head
- We all go through times like this
- You have so much to live for. Why do you want to die?
- What do you want me to do? I can't do anything about your situation
- Just snap out of it. Look on the bright side
- You'll be fine. Stop worrying
- Here's my advice...
- What's wrong with you? Shouldn't you be better by now?

Topic: **Coping with a Mental Illness**

Summary:

We'll talk about coping strategies for individuals struggling with a mental illness (and even those who don't have a diagnosed illness), as a building block for resiliency.

Key Topics:

- learning your triggers
- thought patterns
- coping strategies
- tips for stress reduction

Structure:

approx. 45 min lecture
worksheets and activities available
Q + A after

Learn Your Triggers

What are some things that make you feel negative emotions, or 'trigger' you?

Before you started feeling sad, angry or nervous, what happened?

Keep a mood diary or log to track these things

Topic: Talking about Mental Health

Summary:

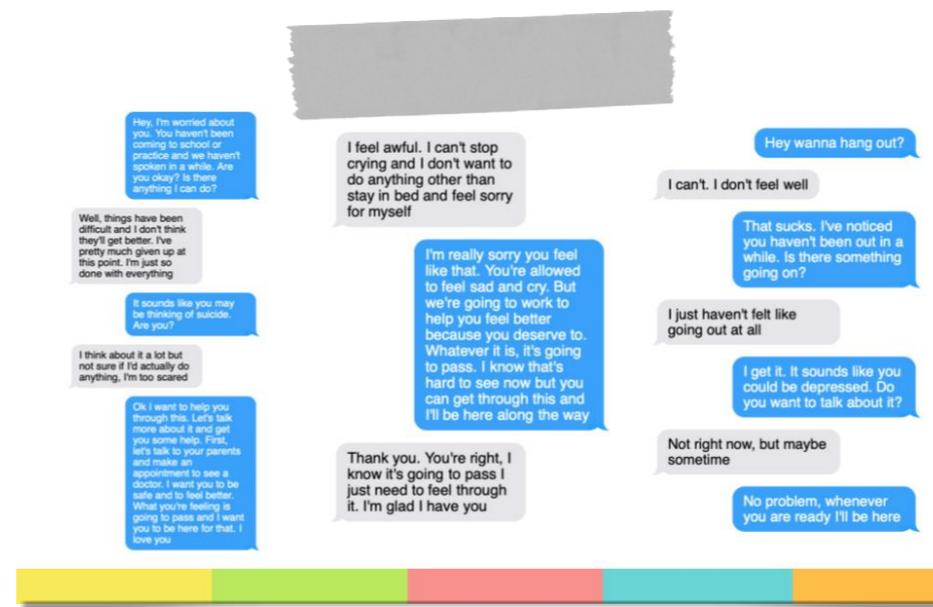
We'll impart advice on how to talk about mental health with someone, and how to bring it up with someone you think is struggling, as well as how to start a conversation if you are struggling yourself. Language is everything. Practice also helps.

Key Topics:

- what to say
- how to start the conversation
- how to respond
- what to do after the conversation

Structure:

approx. 30 min lecture
opportunity for group discussion
worksheets and activities included
role-playing and interactive exercises
Q + A after



Topic: Personal Experiences with Mental Illness

Summary:

You'll hear right from someone who's had lived experience of mental illness. They will share their story, their struggles, lessons and importantly, their path to recovery. Then, you'll have the opportunity to ask questions.

Key Topics:

- topics will vary based on the speaker
- mental illness
- recovery
- story-telling

Structure:

approx. 1 hour talk (story-telling)
Q + A after

Key Points

- Mental illnesses are diseases that affect many aspects of a person's life.
- While they are usually lifelong, mental illnesses are often episodic and most people can function well in everyday life with effective treatment.
- Young people can better understand and communicate with parents and vice versa.



Topic: **Resilience**

Summary:

We'll define resilience, go over how to build resilience and work on it in ourselves and promote it in others, and work on activities that help build resilience.

Key Topics:

- what is resilience?
- why is it important?
- adaptation
- how to build resilience
- self-care and positive mental health

Structure:

approx. 1 hour lecture
worksheets and activities included for resilience building
resources to take home will be given

What is resilience?

The ability to **bounce back** and **overcome** negative experiences or situations

It helps minimize the negative effect of adverse experiences

Allows you to face challenges



How to be more resilient

Make some lifestyle changes

Look after your physical health

Give yourself a break

Build your support network



Topic: **Self-Care**

Summary:

We'll explore self-care: what it is, how to do it, and why we should do it. Then, of course, we'll link it to mental health and show why self-care is essential in order to maintain positive mental health.

Key Topics:

- what is self-care?
- why is it important
- how to do self-care
- maintaining positive mental health

Structure:

approx. 30 min lecture
worksheets and activities available
Q + A after

Self-care

Is not selfish

Prevents burnout

Helps relationships

Makes you more effective

Can't decide? They all sound great?

We get it.

We thought this might happen, so we have a solution for you.

We have done the work for you and put together a presentation that covers all of the important stuff, and can be fit into a 2-hour presentation. It's perfect for students in grades 7-12, but can definitely be modified for just about any grade. It can be done all in one shot in a 2-hour slot, or in two parts of 1-hour each (both work perfectly). Keep in mind, if you want more covered or time for discussion or questions and answers, more time would be required. We love talking to students about mental health, so of course we say the longer the better (and we really think your students will agree)!

Here's what it covers:

PART ONE:

1. Mental illness
 1. statistics
 2. mental health vs. mental illness
 3. levels of mental illness
 4. about common mental illnesses for youth
2. Getting support
 1. what to do
 2. who to talk to
 3. where to go
3. Supporting someone
 1. how to
 2. support strategies

Mental Illness



PART TWO:

1. Mental health
 1. what is it?
2. Stress and coping
 1. stress response
 2. coping strategies
3. Resilience
 1. what is it?
 2. how to build it
4. Self-care
 1. what is it?
 2. how to

Mental Health



You can select any of these topics for your presentations, and we can create a custom presentation for you based on what you'd like covered. If there's a topic related to mental health that you don't see here but would like covered, send us an e-mail and we'd be happy to accommodate you.

Sound interesting?

Here's what to do if you're interested or have any questions about booking a presentation or talk from *Your Mind Matters*.

- e-mail vanessa@yourmindmatters.ca with the word 'presentation' in the subject line.
- Include your school name, grade, and the general timeline in which you'd like us to come. If there's anything else we should know, here's where you should tell us.
- Then, you'll get an online form to fill out with your request. Fill it out, submit it, and we'll be in touch ASAP.

We can't wait to work together :)

Your Mind Matters

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