

# **Mental Health Education: Understanding Mental Health Disorders**

**Grades 8-12**

**Physical and Health Education, Applied Design and Technologies, Science,  
Language Arts**

## **Purpose of the Lesson**

Good mental health and well-being helps us stay balanced and be resilient, to enjoy life and cope with everyday stress, and to bounce back from greater setbacks ([Kelty Mental Health](#)). It is important for the community to recognize that mental health challenges are common. Therefore, the purpose of this lesson is to educate students on different mental health disorders. This will allow an increased awareness for youth about how mental health disorders impact the community and ways to help. The goal is to reduce the stigma in schools and the community around mental health disorders.

## **Curriculum Competencies:**

### **Physical and Health Education**

- ◇ Explore and describe the impact of transition and change on identities (Grade 8)
- ◇ Explore and describe factors that shape personal identities, including social and cultural factors (Grade 9/10)
- ◇ Describe, analyze and assess strategies for managing problems related to mental well-being and substance use, for others (Grade 8/9)

*After Grade 10, this course divides into more specific courses with separate curriculum.*

### **Applied Design, Skills and Technologies**

- ◇ Select, adapt, and as needed learn about, appropriate tools and technologies to extend their capability to complete a task (Grade 8/9)

### **Science**

- ◇ Communicate ideas, findings, and solutions to problems, using scientific language representations, and digital technologies as appropriate, construct evidence-based arguments, etc. (Grade 8/9/10)

### **Language Arts**

- ◇ Access information and ideas for diverse purposes and from a variety of sources and evaluate their relevance, accuracy, and reliability (Grade 8)

- ◇ Use writing and design processes to plan, develop, and create (engaging and meaningful literary and informational) texts for a variety of purposes and audiences (Grade 8/9)

*Also can be used beyond Grade 9 for Composition and New Media 10/11/12.*

### **First Peoples Principles of Learning:**

- ◇ Learning ultimately supports the well-being of the self, the family, the community, the land, the spirits, and the ancestors
- ◇ Learning requires the exploration of one's identity

### **Video**

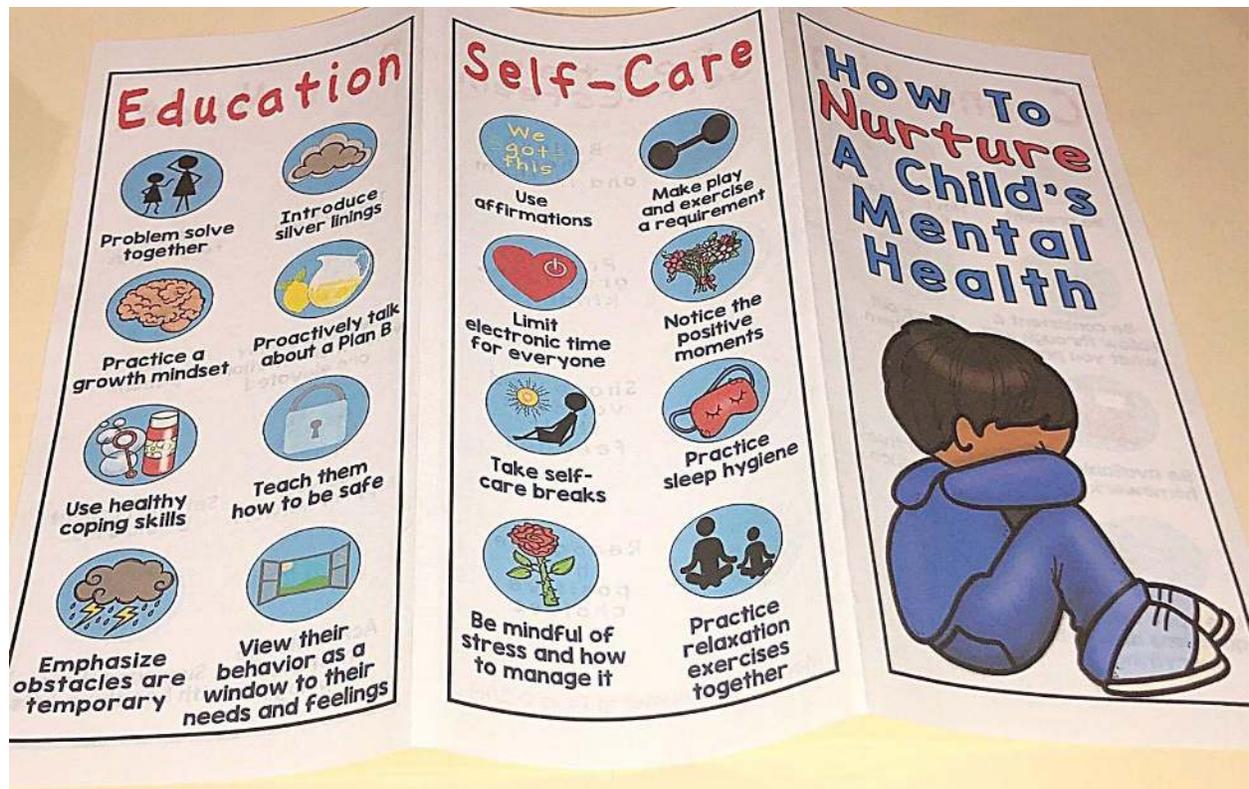
[Mental Illness Education with Dr. Dana Wasserman](#) (Registered Clinical Psychologist)

#### **Guiding questions:**

- What are the symptoms of bipolar disorder?
- What is a psychotic break?
- What are some symptoms of depression?
- What is the difference between sadness and clinical depression? (Answer: lasts longer than two weeks, impacts every day activities as well as your social life, work, school etc.)
- What are some symptoms of psychosis?
- What is a hallucination?
- What is a delusion?
- What are some symptoms of schizophrenia?
- What are some symptoms of obsessive-compulsive disorder?
- What are some symptoms of generalized anxiety disorder?
- What is stigma?

## Step-by-Step Lesson Plan

1. Play Mental Illness Education with Dr. Dana (Clinical Psychologist). You can find the video [HERE](#) or in the Coping with Mental Health Teen section of the Student Mental Health Toolkit.
2. **Pause the video and use the teacher guiding questions to spark discussion.**
2. **Discuss the curricular objectives for this lesson with your class.** Talk about how learning about mental health disorders is a part of all introductory psychology classes in college/university. Ask the class what they think the benefits are of learning about these disorders in high school.
3. **Follow-up Activity:** Have students create an iPad video presentation in groups describing the different mental health disorders and community resources for support. Alternatively, students may create a foldable brochure describing the different mental health disorders and community resources. See below for an example.
4. **Other Suggestions:** Create posters or other visuals for around the school displaying community resources for support with mental health. A great way to do this is to celebrate one of the many mental health awareness days (many of these websites also include lesson plans & videos for teachers!). Celebrate Bell Let's Talk Day (January 29), Hockey Talks (throughout January & February), Mental Health Week (May 4-10<sup>th</sup>), and World Mental Health Awareness Day (October 10<sup>th</sup>).  
[Bell Let's Talk Toolkit](#)  
[NHL Hockey Talks](#)  
[Mental Health Week](#)  
[World Mental Health Awareness Day](#)
5. **Lesson Closure:** Discuss mental health in the media and celebrities that have shared their struggles with the public. For example, Demi Lovato and Dwayne "The Rock" Johnson (see the toolkit [HERE](#) for a video titled: "Mental Health & Celebrities' Mental Health Stories" with these celebrities talking about their mental health struggles!). Talk about counselling support and how it is okay to reach out for help.



<https://www.teacherspayteachers.com/Product/Child-and-Teen-Mental-Health-Caregiver-Poster-and-Brochure-3735855>