

WHAT IS STIGMA?



Grades 8-12 What is Stigma? Physical and Health Education & Career Education

Purpose of the Lesson:

Unfortunately, many people face stigma at some point in their life around mental illness, disabilities, race, and much more. The Stigma-Free Society has been a registered Canadian Charity since 2010 and strives to reduce stigma by having conversations around mental health. Schools, organizations/businesses, and geographical spaces can become designated Stigma-Free Zones by joining our Stigma-Free Zone Designation Program. Our reach is expanding extensively as we inspire more people to commit to the awareness and understanding of the various stigmas, while maintaining a safe space where people are accepting of themselves and others. The focus of this lesson is to help bring this awareness to students by having them complete the Stigma-Free Quiz and the Stigma-Free Pledge to take action in reducing stigma.

Curriculum Competencies:

Physical and Health Education

- Propose and analyze strategies for responding to discrimination, stereotyping, and bullying (Grade 8 /9)
- Create strategies for promoting the health and well-being of the school and community (Grade 8/9)
- Describe, assess and analyze strategies for promoting mental well-being, for self and others (Grade 8/9)

After Grade 9, Physical and Health Education becomes an elective. However, this lesson plan can still be used for Grades 10+.

Career Education

- Recognize the impact of personal public identity (Grade 8/9)

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
- Learning is embedded in memory, history, and story

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Videos

Video 1: Mental Health & Celebrities' Mental Health Stories

Video 2: Living Stigma-Free

Guiding Questions:

Video 1, Mental Health & Celebrities' Mental Health Stories:

- What is stigma?
- What are stereotypes?
- What are some negative stereotypes?
- How can we stop stigma?
- Who were the two celebrities that Andrea talked about? Can you think of any more with mental health challenges?
- What is the overall message that you took from Andrea's video?

Video 2, Living Stigma-Free:

- What is the Stigma-Free Tool for? How might it help you live Stigma-Free?
- What is the Stigma-Free Pledge?
- What are some examples of language that creates stigma?
- What stigmas exist and what are some strategies to reduce these stigmas?
- How does stigma relate to mental well-being?

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Step-by-Step Lesson Plan

- 1. Begin the lesson by watching the video:** "Mental Health & Celebrities' Mental Health Stories" This can be found in the Teens Corner Toolkit Video Library section of the Student Mental Health Toolkit and [HERE](#). This awesome video features Andrea Paquette, the President and Co-Founder of the Stigma-Free Society, explaining what stigma means and what we can do to stop it. She also talks about two celebrities that have been quite open in the media about their mental health struggles (Demi Lovato and Dwayne "The Rock" Johnson).
- 2. Pause the video and use the teacher guiding questions to spark discussion.**
- 3. Next, watch the video "Living Stigma Free"** which can be found in the Teens Corner Toolkit Video Library section of the Student Mental Health Toolkit and [HERE](#). This video dives more into how we can be Stigma-Free and the tools created by the Stigma-Free Society: The Stigma-Free Tool (quiz) and the Stigma-Free Pledge.
- 4. Pause the video and use the teacher guiding questions to spark discussion.**
- 5. Discuss the curricular objectives for this lesson with your class.** Talk about why learning about mental health is important and tie in any current events in the news related to stigma.
- 6. Follow-up Activity: (Laptops or tablets required, unless students do this activity as homework).** Have students take the Stigma-Free Tool (quiz) and Pledge. You can find the tool (quiz) [HERE](#) and pledge [HERE](#). Following this, divide the students into small groups to discuss how to be a role model and help younger peers on the playground instead of being a bystander of bullying. Provide chart paper and pens for group members to write down their ideas. Afterwards, have students report back to the whole class with their group's discussion.
- 7. Lesson Closure:** Ask students how they felt about completing the Stigma-Free Pledge and Quiz. Discuss whether they think other classes should complete this pledge and how that might impact the school community. Talk about the positives of getting the school to be a designated Stigma-Free Zone. Contact the [Stigma-Free Society](#) to take part in the Virtual Stigma-Free School Program.