

TALKING TO TRUSTED ADULTS ABOUT MENTAL HEALTH AND REACHING OUT FOR HELP



Grades 4-7

Talking to Trusted Adults About Mental Health and Reaching Out For Help Physical and Health Education, Language Arts

Purpose of the Lesson:

One of the hardest components of mental health challenges in youth is that it can be isolating. You may have observed in your classroom that youth may seem to be struggling to hide their challenges, in an effort to fit in. Teaching students how to reach out for help is one of the most valuable mental health lessons, especially at a young age where they are developing their communication skills. In this lesson, students will practice using Conversation Cards to discuss mental health, which will help them develop their critical thinking and verbal communication skills. They will also leave the lesson with a “Reaching Out for Help” plan that they can keep in their back pocket for future use.

Curriculum Competencies:

Health and Physical Education (Grade 4-7)

- Describe and assess strategies for managing problems related to mental well-being and substance use (Grade 4).
- Describe and assess strategies for managing problems related to mental well-being and substance use, for others (Grade 5/6/7).

Language Arts (Grade 4-7)

- Recognize the role of language in personal, social, and cultural identity (Grade 4/5).
- Recognize how language constructs personal, social, and cultural identity (Grade 6/7).
- Exchange ideas and perspectives to build shared understanding (Grade 4/5).
- Exchange ideas and viewpoints to build shared understanding and extend thinking (Grade 6/7).
- Communicate in sentences and paragraphs, applying conventions of Canadian spelling, grammar, and punctuation (Grade 5).
- Use an increasing repertoire of conventions of Canadian spelling, grammar, and punctuation (Grade 6/7).

First Peoples Principles of Learning

- Learning requires exploration of one’s identity
- Learning involves generational roles and responsibilities

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Video

Grades 4/5: Talking Mental Health

Guiding Questions:

- What are some signs that your mental health is struggling?
- How do you know when it is time to reach out for help?
- What is mental health?
- Why is mental health just as important as physical health?
- How can you listen to others when they need to talk about mental health?
- What are some examples of feelings that you can use to describe your mood?
- What can you do if your feelings are bothering you?

Grades 6/7: We All Have Mental Health

Guiding Questions:

- Have you ever felt the way that the character feels in the video?
- What did you learn about mental health?
- What are the four components of mental health mentioned in the video? (Answer: feelings, emotions, thinking and mood).
- What does good mental health mean?
- Can we still experience negative feelings if we have good mental health?
- How can we let our friends know we are there to talk if they need to?

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Step-by-Step Lesson Plan

Preparation: Print the “Conversation Cards” questions and worksheet, “My Reaching Out for Help Plan” and the Conversation Starter Ideas Card.

1. **To introduce this lesson to students,** start by watching the video above that corresponds to the appropriate grade level.
2. **Pause the video and use the Guiding Questions to spark discussion.**
3. **Once students have been introduced to the topic of the lesson,** move on to the next activity. Divide your students into groups of 3 or 4, depending on the size of your class. Each group will be assigned 3 questions from our Conversation Cards. Find the cards attached below.
4. **Follow-up Activity 1:** Using the worksheet attached below titled “Conversation Card Worksheet,” students will first try to answer the questions assigned to them on their own, then together as a group. They will write down their answers in complete sentences. Then, go through the assigned conversation cards with each group so they can read the provided answer and write it down. At the end of the activity, students will discuss and reflect on what they have learned.
5. **Get students to choose a volunteer who will share what their group has learned in the activity. They share their answers with the class.**
6. **Follow-up Activity 2:** Now that students have learned more about mental health and stigma, they should hopefully feel more comfortable talking about their own mental health. The next part of this lesson helps students make a plan for who they will reach out to when they need help, what are some signs they should reach out, and what type of conversation starters they may use with their trusted adults. Find the worksheet titled “My Reaching Out for Help Plan” attached below.
7. **Lesson Closure:** Emphasize to students that everyone has mental health, and that it is OK to talk about it. Just like they may need extra support if they broke their arm, sometimes they may also need help with their mental health. It may also be helpful to remind them that if they don’t want to talk to someone at home, they can also talk to one of their teachers or school counsellors.

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Conversation Card Questions

1. What is mental health?
2. What is mental illness?

1. What is stigma? (Hint: judgment, assumption)
2. What is self-stigma?

1. How can stigma be harmful?
2. How can you help eliminate stigma in school?

(Stigma is when we make negative assumptions about a person, situation or quality based on what makes them different.)

1. Is addiction a mental illness? Explain why or why not.
2. How can you help a friend with mental illness?

1. What is depression?
2. What is anxiety?

1. Why is it important we talk about mental health?
2. Which is more important, mental health or physical health?

1. What does inclusion mean?
2. Why is inclusion important?

1. What do you do when you see one of your peers being bullied?
2. You know, I'm just a kid. How can my voice make a difference in fighting stigma?

(Stigma is when we make negative assumptions about a person, situation or quality based on what makes them different.)

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Conversation Card Worksheet

Talking about mental health is very important. The more we talk about it, the more we learn. Use the Conversation Cards Questions to complete the following activity. Your teacher will assign you 3 questions. First, as a group, write down what you think the answer is. Then, write down the actual answer. Finally, reflect on what you have learned from this activity.

Question 1

Question:

Your Answer:

Answer on the Conversation Card:

Question 2:

Question:

Your Answer:

Answer on the Conversation Card:

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Conversation Card Worksheet

What did you learn from this activity? Answer this question in 2-5 sentences.

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My Reaching Out For Help Plan

Who will you reach out to when you need help? (Ex. Mom/Dad, Grandpa, Aunt...)

- 1)
- 2)
- 3)

What are some signs that you may need extra support? When can you tell your mental health is struggling? (These will be unique to you!)

- 1)
- 2)
- 3)
- 4)
- 5)

Conversation Starter Ideas

I've noticed that lately I've been feeling [blank]. Can we talk about this?

I have been feeling [blank] because OR I have been feeling [blank] and I don't know why.

I think my mental health is struggling. Could we chat about a plan that will help me get better?