

Student Mental Health in Action

Know the Facts

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Grades 9 – 12

Lesson plan

This is the first in a series of four lessons to support the development of basic mental health knowledge and help-seeking skills. Each lesson will include:

- **Minds On:** an activity for student reflection
- **Action Task:** engagement with the core content of the lesson
- **Consolidation:** activities for students to continue the learning
- **Transition:** a brief practice/activity to end in a positive way and help students transition to the rest of their day
- **Safety:** a reminder about available resources and encouragement of help-seeking

Note: a [slide deck](#) for the lesson has been prepared for your use. Additional resources (e.g., Kahoots, videos, worksheets) are also embedded throughout the lesson to support various activities.

OVERALL EXPECTATIONS

Students learn skills to better understand mental health and mental illness so they can better support their overall health and school success.

LEARNING GOALS	SUCCESS CRITERIA
• Challenge common misconceptions about mental health and consider their negative impact. • Demonstrate an understanding of mental health, mental illness, and the dual continuum. • Increase knowledge needed to help take care of our own well-being and the well-being of those around us.	Co-develop success criteria with your students using the following questions: “How will we know we are achieving our learning goals? What will it look like/sound like?” For example: • I can recognize that mental health is a positive concept. • I can practice, observe, and apply strategies to respond to misinformation about mental health. • I can take steps to treat my mental and physical health similarly.
CONSIDERATIONS	
• Classroom educators may need to differentiate the activities to meet the needs of all learners within the class/group and ensure they can engage with the information in developmentally appropriate and accessible ways. For example, consider students requiring accommodations or modifications to engage in the learning. • Given the possibility that students will be engaged in remote learning, when students are asked to participate, offer a variety of options. For example, they might respond on post-it notes, through a virtual tool, or orally with a partner. When possible, offer students choice and ensure activities are inclusive.	



CONSIDERATIONS (continued)

- Classroom educators may need to differentiate the activities to meet the needs of all learners within the class or group and ensure they can engage with the information in developmentally appropriate and accessible ways. For example, consider students requiring accommodations or modifications to engage in the learning.
- Approaches to all instruction, including mental health information, must be mediated through respectful conversations about students' cultural contexts, lived realities, inequity, bias, discrimination, and harassment.
- The focus on emotions may be difficult for some students. Be prepared to connect students to additional supports, if needed. Refer to the following resources for more information and take time to consider your school and board circle of support and service pathways. Know what to do and who to connect with if a student seems like they might be struggling with their mental health.
 - [One-Call Desk Reference](https://smho-smso.ca) (smho-smso.ca)
 - [Talking with Parents and Families about Mental Health](https://smho-smso.ca) (smho-smso.ca)
 - [Circle of Support and System Pathways – Flowchart](https://smho-smso.ca) (smho-smso.ca)

For more suggestions for delivering the series of lessons, see the "[Educator preparation suggestions for MH LIT: Student Mental Health in Action](#)" resource.

SETTING THE STAGE

Spend a few minutes talking with the class about what students need to feel comfortable discussing mental health. Acknowledge there is stigma related to the topic. Collaboratively create some "ground rules" or shared norms to guide the discussion. Here are some suggestions:

- ▶ Be open to learning.
- ▶ There is room for everyone to contribute, but you don't have to speak if you don't want to.
- ▶ Allow space for people to speak. One person speaks at a time.
- ▶ Use thoughtful, non-stigmatizing language about mental health that makes everyone feel included.
- ▶ Listen to and respect each other's opinions and points of view, even if you disagree.
- ▶ Be open to each other's experiences and appreciate differences. Value everyone's voice.
- ▶ Share the mental health facts and information with others but keep our conversation private.
- ▶ Ask for additional ideas from the group.

Teacher prompt: "This is a school lesson, so we'll be focusing on sharing facts and reliable information rather than sensitive personal stories, which take time and attention to share and may be upsetting for some students. If there is a personal situation you would like to speak about, please see me after class. I'll also be sharing some resources at the end of the lesson."

If a student does start to make a disclosure during class, you may redirect them using a statement such as the following: "Thank you for sharing. This is important and I want to give it the time and attention it deserves. Let's check in after class."



MINDS ON

Warm up activity

Ask students to share three words that come to mind when they think about mental health (e.g., on post-it notes, through a virtual tool, or orally with a partner). Choose the method that best suits your learning situation and the needs of your students. Then ask students to do the same for mental illness.

Ask students to consider their responses:

- ▶ Were they similar?
- ▶ Did they describe mental illness both times?
- ▶ Why do they think that happened?

Teacher prompt: “When we talk about mental health, we often think about mental illness. Mental health is a positive concept. That’s what we are going to learn more about today.”

Mental health and myth busting quiz

The second part of the minds on is an interactive quiz that will allow you to learn more about students’ knowledge and perceptions of mental health. It will also give you the opportunity to dispel some common myths and misconceptions about mental health and mental illness. The questions, answers, and notes are available in [Appendix A](#) and the quiz is also available as a slide deck and Kahoot quiz for you to project to your class, making it easy for you and your students to use. A worksheet has been provided for additional flexibility.

Following the quiz, use the notes to engage in a discussion about the correct answer.

Teacher prompt (to close): “There is a lot of misinformation out there, and many of us don’t have the basic information about mental health we need to help us take care of our own well-being and the well-being of those around us. That’s why we’re having this lesson.”

[Slide Deck](#)
[Kahoot Quiz](#)
[Worksheet](#)

Note: Some educators will choose to use Kahoot or another digital tool to bring forward information about mental health in an interesting way. This can help with student engagement, but it is important to avoid presenting the material in a game-like manner. Some students will have deep personal connections to the content and presenting it as a game-like quiz can be experienced as trivializing or diminishing their experiences and the importance of the topic. Please remember to use a sensitive approach when presenting the mental health facts in this way.

ACTION TASK

Introduction to the dual continuum: The Action Task is a discussion of the mental health and mental illness dual continuum. It helps students understand that mental health and mental illness are two different things. See [Appendix B](#) for a graphic of the dual continuum. A slide deck contains ‘press and play’ videos has also been developed to assist in facilitating this lesson.

[Introduction to the dual continuum – slide deck](#)

Teacher prompt: “We all have mental health, just like we all have physical health. **Mental health** is a positive state of wellness and flourishing or thriving. When we are mentally healthy, we enjoy life, explore and take healthy risks, manage challenges, and find ways to contribute to the world around us. It is something we want for ourselves and the people we care about.”



A thoughtful way to understand mental health comes from the First Nations Mental Wellness Continuum Framework (Health Canada & Assembly of First Nations, 2014). It suggests that mental health and well-being is inspired through ‘a balance of the mental, physical, spiritual, and emotional.’ This balance is in place when we have:

- ▶ **Purpose** in our daily lives
- ▶ **Hope** for the future
- ▶ A sense of **belonging** and connectedness within our families, to community, and to culture
- ▶ A sense of **meaning** and an understanding of how our lives and those of our families and communities are part of creation and a rich history

This way of thinking about mental health is different from the way we used to understand it. We used to think that mental health was on a single continuum or line that went from mental illness at one end to mental health at the other, and we moved along the continuum depending on what was happening in our lives and other factors. Now we know it’s more complex than that. Mental health and mental illness are actually two separate yet interconnected ideas. **It’s a dual continuum.**

In the dual continuum model, we still move along states of mental well-being which can change over time, and all of us can occasionally struggle with poor mental health. But now we understand that not having a mental illness does not guarantee we feel well, and everyone, including those with mental illness, has an opportunity to live as a whole and healthy individual.

The idea of having a mental illness but feeling mentally healthy or thriving at the same time may seem a bit confusing. It can help to think about physical health. If someone with diabetes (a physical illness) has what they need to manage their illness, they may feel well and experience good mental health, despite having an illness. The same is true for someone with depression. If they have what they need to manage their illness, they may also feel mentally well and experience a good quality of life.

Let’s consider two examples:

These student profiles are also available as short videos in the slide deck.

Jayden has depression. They take an effective medication and are learning strategies to manage their mood from a mental health professional they trust. Their friends and family are supportive and understanding, and their school is flexible about the time they need for their medical appointments and offers Jayden help with any missed work. They are taking classes they are interested in and working toward a career path they feel will be a good fit. Despite their depression, Jayden is experiencing good mental health. (On the dual continuum graphic, this represents the “good mental health with mental illness” quadrant.)

[Jayden Student Profile Video – YouTube](#)

[Jayden Student Profile Video – Vimeo](#)

Bina does not have a mental illness. Because of pressure from home, she is taking courses which are not areas of interest for her. She does not enjoy the work and is struggling to maintain the marks her parents expect. Because of all the time she spends on her classes, Bina has had to give up the hobbies and interests she enjoyed and she spends little time with her friends. She is starting to feel overwhelmed, and often has trouble sleeping and stomach aches. Despite not having a mental illness, Bina is experiencing poor mental health. (On the dual continuum graphic, this represents the “poor mental health without mental illness” quadrant.)

[Bina Student Profile Video – YouTube](#)

[Bina Student Profile Video – Vimeo](#)



CONSOLIDATION

Student reflection:

- ▶ If you had a physical health concern, what do you think you would need to make you feel well and experience a good quality of life?
- ▶ If you had a mental health concern, what do you think you would need to make you feel well and experience a good quality of life?
- ▶ Why do we often feel more comfortable asking for what we need to support our physical health versus our mental health?

Note: student reflections are intended to be flexible. You may ask students to reflect individually or share their reflections (e.g., orally with a partner or the larger group, or through post it notes or other virtual tools).

Wrap up questions:

- ▶ What new information did you learn?
- ▶ Is there anything from our discussion that really stood out for you or surprised you?
- ▶ Has anything changed in terms of the way you think about mental health?

Key messages:

- ▶ We all have mental health, just like we all have physical health.
- ▶ Mental health is a good thing! We all want to have good mental health for ourselves, our family, and our friends.
- ▶ Everyone can strive for good mental health, including those with mental illness.

TRANSITION

Taking Care of Yourself

Teacher prompt: “Talking about mental health is very personal and can give rise to strong feelings. I encourage you to take care of yourselves today by doing something you enjoy and that gives you a sense of well-being.”

Ask students how many of them charge their cell phones every day. Tell them we also need to recharge as people. Challenge them not to take better care of their phones than themselves.

Student handouts

- ▶ [Self-Care Checklist](http://kidshelpphone.ca) (kidshelpphone.ca)
- ▶ [Self-Care 101 for Students](http://smho-smso.ca) (smho-smso.ca)



Activity

Ask students to review the handout(s) and reflect on the strategies they use:

- ▶ Are some easier for them?
- ▶ Are some more difficult?
- ▶ Do they have a variety of strategies available for different circumstances (e.g., strategies they can use at home, at school, if they don't have much time, and so on)?
- ▶ Or are their strategies all of one type (e.g., physical, such as sports – what would happen if they sprained an ankle)?
- ▶ Is there a strategy they would like to practice more often?
- ▶ Has the pandemic affected access to their preferred strategies? How can they adapt their strategies to fit our current reality?

Teacher prompt: “Not all strategies work for all people, and that’s okay! The idea is just to have a variety of tools available that are flexible enough to suit different circumstances. Remember that part of staying mentally well also means connecting with others who share your interests, culture, identities, and values.”

Optional video: Provide the class a video guided practice to help students wrap up the lesson and prepare to move on to whatever they have next in their day. Briefly let the class know the next lesson is coming and the topic (understanding your own mental health).

Finding Calm – Forest Visualization Video

SAFETY REMINDERS AND RESOURCES FOR STUDENTS

Remind students that, if they are feeling unwell (e.g., overwhelmed, anxious, sad), they can talk to you or another adult they trust. There are people who work in schools, and in our community, who are there to help them find ways to feel better. Provide them with the resource list and encourage help-seeking.

Kids Help Phone

Call: 1-800-668-6868

Text: CONNECT to 686868

First Nations and Inuit Hope for Wellness Help Line

Call: 1-855-242-3310

Black Youth Helpline

Call: 416-285-9944 or toll-free 1-833-294-8650

LGBT YouthLine

Text: 647-694-4275

Trans Lifeline

Call: 877-330-6366

TIP: Some phone lines are open 24/7 and some have certain hours. Encourage students to check out the ones they prefer.





Appendix A

Mental Health Quiz

[Slide Deck](#)
[Kahoot Quiz](#)
[Worksheet](#)

#	QUESTION	ANSWER OPTIONS	NOTES
1	In a given year, how many Canadians will experience a form of mental illness?	20% (correct) 5% 40% 10%	Each year 1 in 5 Canadians experience a mental health problem. That means in the average secondary school classroom, there will be students who are impacted. Mental health problems are common, yet we don't always talk about them. This reminds us how important it is to use careful language about mental illness because it may be very personal to someone nearby. (Source: Canadian Institute of Health Research).
2	True or false, the majority of Ontario students in grades 7-12 rate their mental health as good to excellent.	True (correct) False	In 2021, 62% of students rated their mental health as good to excellent. 39% of students felt that the pandemic negatively affected their mental health "very much" or "extremely". (Source: OSDUHS, 2021). Since the pandemic began, rates of psychological distress among young people (including symptoms of anxiety, depression, and other mental health concerns) have increased globally (Source: US Surgeon General's Advisory, 2021). We don't know if this negative impact will last. We are still learning about outcomes of the pandemic as we return to more familiar lives and routines. In the meantime, there are steps we can take to build our mental health, like exercising, getting enough sleep, and eating as best we can to support our physical health. We can also show kindness to our classmates and check in to make sure our friends are okay.



#	QUESTION	ANSWER OPTIONS	NOTES
3	How many Ontario students were preoccupied with/ worried about their weight or body shape during the pandemic?	27% 63% 15% 46% (correct)	In 2021 almost half (46%) of Ontario students in grades 7-12 reported being preoccupied with/ worried about their weight or body shape (OSDUHS, 2021). In addition, there was a significant increase in the number of children and youth seeking help for eating disorders in both Ontario and across Canada throughout the pandemic (Agostino 2021; Couturier et al., 2021; Devoe et al., 2022; Katzman, 2021; Spettigue et al., 2021; Toulany, 2022; Zipfel et al., 2022). Approximately one-third of Canadian youth report disordered eating (Henderson et al., 2017), which includes a broad spectrum of behaviours that can be precursors to eating disorders. Why might eating issues be on the rise? Possible discussion points include: • There was more time spent in social isolation and away from familiar routines and in-school activities during the pandemic. • There was an increase in screen time, including social media (which is known to be linked with eating issues). Comparing ourselves with unrealistic appearance ideals can make us less satisfied with our own appearance and bodies. • The pandemic may have helped us notice eating issues that were there all along.

Educator note: One-time presentations on eating disorders and assigning eating disorders as an isolated topic of study/project topic are not effective in changing/improving the eating attitudes and behaviours of students. In fact, they may inadvertently increase preoccupation with weight and shape. Instead, a whole-school approach is recommended. [Eating Disorders Ontario](#) is currently working to bring a model of eating disorder prevention and early intervention to schools (ED-PPEI).

Optional Educator Resources:

[Eating disorders: Important things to know - Kids Help Phone](#)
[A guide for Educators on How Schools Can Help](#)

For training opportunities: ocoped.ca call 416 340-4051



#	QUESTION	ANSWER OPTIONS	NOTES
4	How do student ratings of good mental health change across grades 7 to 12?	They increase They decrease (correct) They stay the same	In grades 7-8, 80% of students rated their mental health over the past year as good to excellent. This decreased to 61% in grades 9-10 and 49% in grades 11-12 (Source: OSDUHS, 2021). This pattern was also seen before the pandemic. Why do you think this happens? What could help maintain good mental health students experience in the earlier grades? Could learning about mental health at an earlier age help prevent these changes? Secondary school can be challenging, which makes it a great time to ramp up practices that support our mental health so we are better able to handle stress that may appear. There are things we can do to positively impact our mental health, like avoiding excessive screen time, spending time doing things that we enjoy, spending time with the supportive people in our lives, and learning more about mental health like we are today.
5	True or false, physical habits like sleep, what we eat, and exercise impact mental health.	True (correct) False	When we take good care of our physical health, we are also improving our mental health. And when we take care of our mental health, it can make us feel better physically. Our physical and mental health are connected!
6	What percentage of mental health concerns begin in childhood and adolescence?	25% 10% 50% 70% (correct)	About 70% of people tell us that their mental health concerns first appeared when they were children or youth. That makes talking about mental health early, and asking for help when needed, very important. When young people get help for feelings of anxiety, depressed mood, or other mental health problems early, it can help prevent more serious difficulties later. Why is it that people will go to see their doctor for an earache almost right away, but when they are experiencing emotional concerns, they don't?



#	QUESTION	ANSWER OPTIONS	NOTES
7	True or false, people with mental illness are likely to be violent and unpredictable.	True False (correct)	People with mental health issues are no more violent than any other group in our society. In fact, people with mental illness are actually more likely to be the victims of violence than other groups. There is still stigma, discrimination, and biases perpetuated in the media and popular culture. (Source: Canadian Mental Health Association (n.d.), “Violence and Mental Illness”. Retrieved from www.cmha.ca). Young people like you can help change this! Fight stigma with truth.
8	True or false, Ontario secondary school students reported more vaping and alcohol use during the pandemic than before it began.	True False (correct)	Among students in grades 9-12, past year vaping dropped from 23% in 2019 to 15% in 2021, and past year alcohol use decreased from 42% in 2019 to 32% in 2021. The most commonly used drug that the survey asked about was high-caffeine energy drinks (33% of students reported past year use). (Source: OSDUHS, 2021). At the same time, we know that there have been concerns with substance use during the pandemic. For example, in another survey most Canadians 16–25 years of age who used substances reported an increase in the use of one or more substances during the pandemic (Source: Chaiton et al., 2022). It’s important to seek help if you need it. Does this data make sense to you? Why do you think some substance use went down during the pandemic and some went up?
9	True or false, only half of Canadians would tell a friend or co-worker that they have a family member with a mental illness.	True (correct) False	Canadians continue to report that they are more likely to share a family member’s physical illness versus mental illness. (Source: Canadian Medical Association, 2008, 8th Annual National Report Card on Health Care).



#	QUESTION	ANSWER OPTIONS	NOTES
10	True or false, mental illness is a sign of weak character.	True False (correct)	Statements like this seem to blame those with mental illness and imply they could be well if they just tried harder. There are also other negative messages associated with mental illness, such as the person is seeking attention. (Source: Centre for Addiction and Mental Health, Introduction to Mental Health 101. Retrieved from www.camh.ca) It doesn't work like this. Some people have more risk of mental illness because of the negative impacts of things like racism, poverty, bullying, and so on, but mental health problems can happen to any of us. When you hear someone speak negatively about someone who is experiencing a mental health problem, consider how you would wish them to speak if it were you, your friend, or a family member and help them to change their words. It's important to think about how we talk about mental illness. Our words have an impact.
11	True or false, mental illness is mostly caused by genetics.	True False (correct)	Mental illness is complicated and can be linked to a variety of factors, such as our genetics, our experiences, our relationships and supports, our access to health care, current stressors, and many others. Fortunately, there are many factors that affect our mental health that we can influence.
12	True or false, there are treatments that can help mental health problems.	True (correct) False	For example, with the right treatment, 80% of people with depression feel better or no longer experience symptoms at all. Both talking therapy and medication can help. No one treatment will work for every person, so it's important to find the right fit. (Source: Canadian Mental Health Association). It should be acknowledged that, in addition to treatment, the things around us also matter. Our environment, life circumstances, and supports all play a role in our mental health and well-being. Keep in mind that there are many ways of getting help. Cultural practices, like spending time on the land and drumming, and support from an Elder can be helpful for some people. Being with others who identify as 2SLGBTQ+ and sharing experiences and a sense of belonging helps others. Some students benefit from meeting with a school social worker or psychologist to get them through a rough time. The first step is to reach out to an adult you trust who can help find what will work for you.



#	QUESTION	ANSWER OPTIONS	NOTES
13	Approximately how many students in Ontario visit a mental health care professional in a given year?	12% 31% (correct) 6% 27%	31% of Ontario students in grades 7-12 visited a mental health care professional (such as a doctor, nurse, or counsellor) for a mental health issue. About 1 in 10 students reported that they called a telephone crisis helpline or visited a website (or both) because they needed to talk to a counsellor about a problem (Source: OSDUHS, 2021). In terms of how they preferred to receive support for mental health concerns, students most often indicated a preference to receive support in person. Chances are, you didn't know seeking support was so common. Why don't we feel freer to talk about it? When students in our school are experiencing a mental health problem, where can they go for support? Note: know your school circle of support and service pathways and share them with students. Name your school social worker, psychologist, or other available mental health support staff.
14	True or false, there was a significant increase in the number of Ontario secondary school students seeking counselling over the phone/internet after the pandemic began versus before.	True (correct) False	In 2021, 9% of students in grades 9-12 reported seeking counselling over the phone/internet versus 5% before the pandemic. Despite this increase, significantly more students also reported having an unmet need for mental health support (42% in 2021 versus 35% in 2019). (Source: OSDUHS, 2021). If you need support, speak to an adult at school. They can help connect you to supports at school or in the community.



#	QUESTION	ANSWER OPTIONS	NOTES
15	True or false, Ontario students rate their knowledge about how to cope with small stressors and big changes, and stay hopeful when things aren't going well, as strong.	True False (correct)	In a 2021 study about student mental health completed by School Mental Health Ontario and Wisdom2Action (#HearNowON), almost 2500 responses were received. Students highlighted their knowledge on these topics was limited. Similar results were found in 2019 when students were asked the same questions. Would you agree with these responses? Having information and the skills to support our mental health is key to our wellness. That's why our conversation today is so important.
16	True or false, these youth helplines are free of charge: Kids Help Phone, LGBT YouthLine, and Black Youth Helpline.	True (correct) False	Kids Help Phone, Black Youth Helpline, and LGBT YouthLine are just some of the free texting/helplines available to youth.
17	True or false, every school board in Ontario has a Mental Health Leader and most have trained school mental health professionals, like social work and psychology staff, who provide support to students who are experiencing mental health concerns.	True (correct) False	School can be a great place to seek mental health support. There is no extra travel required, services are free of charge, and school staff can help you connect. What you share is also private in the same way it is when you seek mental health support in the community. Note: students should be aware that notes kept by mental health professionals are not stored in their OSRs.

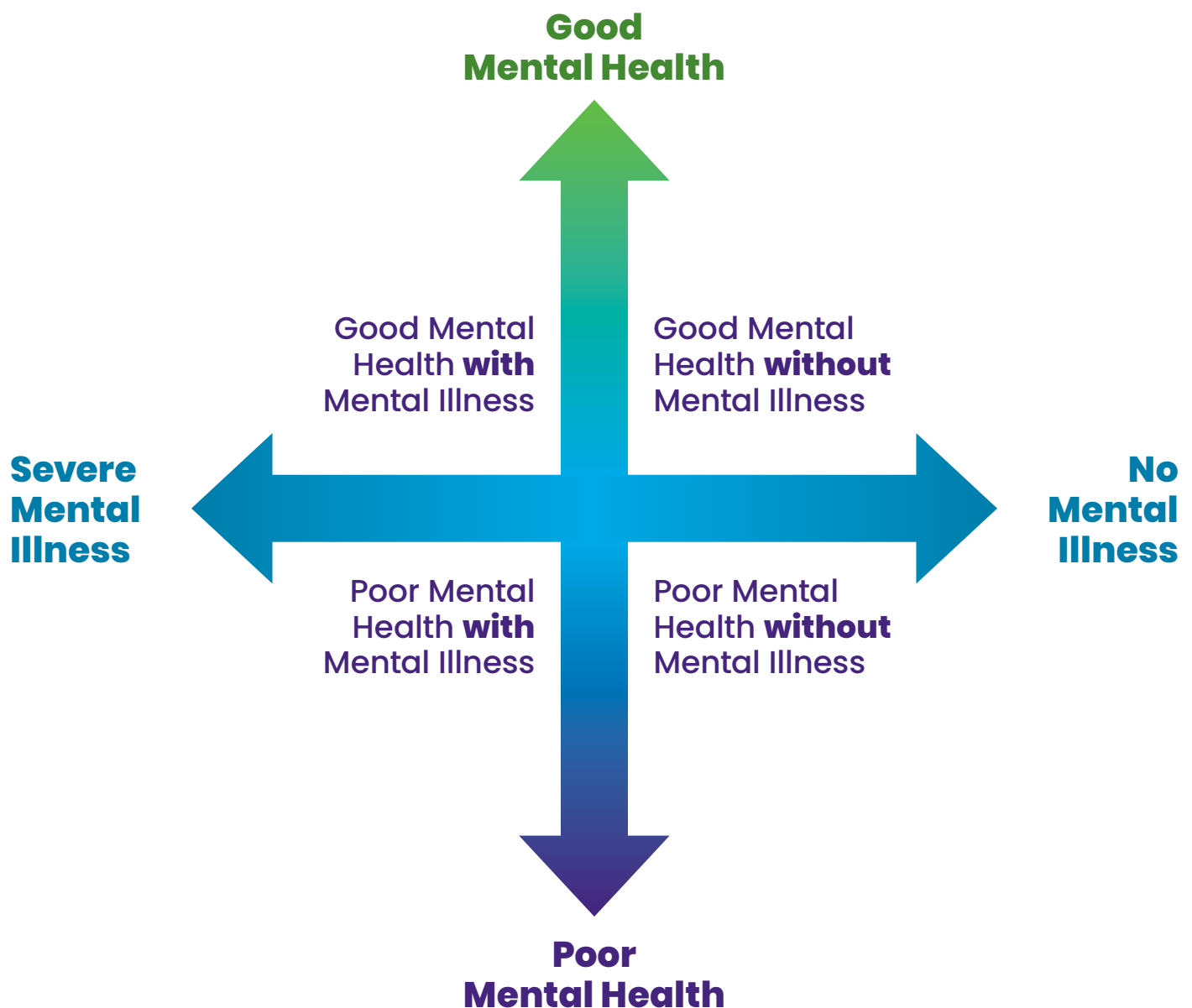




Appendix B

The Dual Continuum

The full action activity also available on a [Slide Deck](#)





Extensions

Extend the lessons for your class

Should you have time and feel that mental health literacy is particularly relevant to your curriculum area and/or group of students, below are additional activities for you and your class.

Student voice

Where it fits: you may wish to introduce this conversation at the beginning of the Action portion of the lesson. It offers opportunities to discuss why mental health literacy is being brought into the classroom.

Share with students that in 2019, almost 1200 students and young people across Ontario were asked about their mental health knowledge needs and learning preferences. Ask students to predict the results using the method that works best for your learning situation.

- ▶ How many students wanted to learn about mental health at school?
- ▶ What did they most want to learn about?
- ▶ Did they feel it belonged in the classroom?

Then provide the following information:

- ▶ 97% of young people wanted to learn more about mental health at school. In particular, they wanted to learn about:
 - Early warning signs of a mental health problem
 - Ways to cope with their thoughts and emotions
 - How and where to ask for help
 - How to help a friend
- ▶ 78.5% indicated they want to learn about mental health in the classroom as part of regular instruction.
- ▶ 82.2% were not currently involved in mental health leadership initiatives at their school.
- ▶ 83.7% wanted to be.
- ▶ Students also tell us that their mental health and well-being are the foundation of school success. Students who are feeling mentally well are more ready to learn, feel a stronger sense of belonging at school, and perform better academically.

#HearNowON 2019: [Executive summary and full report](#) (smho-smso.ca).

Video summary: [Ontario students have a lot to say about mental health #HearNowON](#)

View this on **YouTube**



Student reflection: How do you think mental health and well-being affect school success? Do you think mental health should be a regular part of school, like physical health? What would you want that to look like? How would you like to be involved in mental health leadership in our school?

Note: to assist you in extending and reinforcing the concepts shared in this lesson, all classroom resources mentioned in this lesson have been organized into readily accessible links you can access: [Classroom Resources](#)

Extend your learning as an educator

Mental health and well-being aren't just important during a few days or lessons a year. They are important all year long. **Look for opportunities to integrate well-being and mental health literacy into course content.** Health and physical education provide a natural connection, but they are not the only place for students to learn about mental health and well-being. Many novels also offer obvious links. Perhaps a creative writing project could provide opportunities. Or does the character trait or virtue of the month connect to well-being? Could you look at brain chemistry or structure and mental health within a science course? Or maybe a math course provides a chance to examine mental health statistics. There are many ways to embed well-being into the work students do every day.

Here are some additional ways to continue to bring well-being into your classroom and school.

Learn	Grow	Partner	Extend
Access the School Mental Health Ontario Website for additional ideas about how to support student mental health and well-being: Take your learning deeper with the educator mental health literacy course developed collaboratively by School Mental Health Ontario and Wilfrid Laurier University. It's free and available online.	Student voice indicates that the majority of students are not currently involved in mental health leadership initiatives at their schools, but most would like to be. Students are also interested in opportunities to participate in mental health clubs, events, and other initiatives. HearNowON Student voice summary of findings Consider the opportunities in your school. Could you start a well-being club or student mental health leadership team? Student voice and participation are great ways to ensure well-being initiatives are engaging and meet the needs of your school community.	Take full advantage of your professional support services school team, if one is available. Professional support services staff can help you identify well-being priorities, resources, and supports; they can provide professional learning opportunities, such as lunch and learns; and they can partner with you in the delivery of programs. Have a conversation with your school team about the full range of supports and services they offer.	Continue to bring mental health and well-being into your classroom. There are a variety of resources available to assist you. • Secondary Virtual Field Trip – Visualization • Anxiety Management and Coping Social Media Bundles for Secondary Students • Social Emotional Learning Posters for Secondary Students





Take care of yourself – educator mental health matters

We recognize that the mental health and well-being of students, staff, and families are inextricably linked, particularly at this difficult time. We know there have been challenges for school and board staff. The pressure has been intense, all while you also experience the pandemic. We know that you are doing all you can to help your students through this. We hope that you can prioritize your wellness and mental health, as well. Personal wellness looks different for everyone. There is no one way to maintain balance in the face of the challenges we are facing together. Taking time for you, to engage in well-being practices and maintain connections that help you to feel well, is so very important, and sets an excellent example for our students.

[Personal Resiliency Tips for
Helpers Who Help Students](#)
(smho-smso.ca)

[Take Care of Yourself](#)
(smso-smso.ca)

[Coping with
Stress and Anxiety](#)
(camh.ca)

If you feel you could benefit from support for your own mental health and well-being, connect with:

- ▶ Your family doctor
- ▶ Your board Employee Assistance Program (EAP)
- ▶ [Mental Health & Addiction Treatment Services | Connex Ontario](#) Also available at 1-866-531-2600
- ▶ [Get medical advice: Telehealth Ontario | Ontario.ca](#) Also available at 1-866-797-0000
- ▶ [Wellness Together Canada | Home](#) (portal.gs)
- ▶ [Ontario 211 | Community and Social Services Help Line](#) (211ontario.ca)

If you are in crisis:

- ▶ [Crisis Text Line | Text HOME To 741741](#) Crisis Text Line, powered by Kids Help phone, provides free, 24/7, nationwide service to people of all ages in Canada
- ▶ Go to the emergency room of your local hospital or call 911 (if you feel safe to do so) right away. If you choose to call 911, you may request that a mental health professional who understands your culture be sent.

