

Decision Support Tool for Classroom Teachers

Checklist regarding Student Mental Health Awareness Activities

(Adapted from the SMH-ON School Mental Health Decision Support Tool: Mental Health Awareness Initiatives)

One-Time Presentations/Guest speakers – One-time guest speakers/presentations about mental illness or suicide are not recommended for school-wide audiences. If you are considering having a guest speaker in your class to speak about mental health and mental illness, consider the following:

YES	NO	
		Have I consulted with and/or notified my school administrator regarding the guest speaker/presentation?
		Is the content and message of the presentation or speaker consistent with the goals of the board's strategic mental health and addictions plan?
		Have I vetted the content with a school mental health professional (e.g., school social worker, psychological consultant) to ensure it contains accurate information, focuses on reducing stigma, and promotes help-seeking behaviours?
		Is the content developmentally appropriate for the students in my class?
		Are there any students (or staff) who might be more vulnerable to this information given their personal circumstances? Do I have a plan in place if a student becomes upset during the presentation?
		Do I know who in the school or board could help me with support if needed?
		Have I referenced the list of suggested interview questions for potential mental health speakers? (<i>School Mental Health Decision Support Tool: Mental Health Awareness Initiatives, Version for School Administrators - Appendix B</i>).
		Am I comfortable with the content of this presentation being linked to myself as a teacher and my school?
		Have I considered the timing of this presentation? Will the timing allow for appropriate observation and debriefing with students following the presentation? (Avoid Mondays, Fridays, and late in the day).

Mental Health Videos – If you are giving consideration to using a mental health video please note it should be part of a larger plan, not used in isolation:

YES	NO	
		Have I viewed the full content of the video?
		Is the content and message in the video, presentation or speaker consistent with the goals of the board's strategic mental health and addictions plan?
		Have I ensured the content comes from a reputable mental health organization and/or has been vetted by a school mental health professional?
		Is the content developmentally appropriate for the students?
		Have possible triggers for all students been considered, and have supports been put in place to address students and/or staff who may be triggered?
		Have I consulted with and/or notified my school administrator regarding the use of the video?



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Social Media Campaigns – If a request is made to participate in, promote, or endorse a social media campaign related to mental health, please consider the following:

YES	NO	
		Would I be comfortable having someone come into the school and deliver the social media campaign message and content in person to all students, staff, parents, community members, & senior administration of the board
		Would I be comfortable printing off ALL content and distributing in hard copy to all students, staff, parents, community members, & senior administration of the board?
		Have I vetted the campaign with a school mental health professional to ensure it contains accurate information, focuses on reducing stigma and promotes help-seeking behaviours?
		Am I comfortable with the content of this campaign being linked to myself and my school?
		Have I consulted with and/or notified my school administrator regarding the social media campaign?

Evidence-informed Suicide Awareness Activities – Secondary school students want to learn about suicide risks, warning signs, and how to help a friend. How this information is shared, and when, is critical. This is an area that is extremely complex, and carries many risks. Careful thought must be given to the type of awareness activities used with students. Before inviting speakers, videos, social media campaigns, surveys or any other activities involving suicide it is important that you check in with your school administrator and with a school mental health professional. They can support you in doing this important work safely.

YES	NO	
		I must consult with a school mental health professional.
		I must have the consent and support of my school administrator.

Surveys about Mental Health – Occasionally you may be contacted to have your school/class participate in research related to mental health and well-being. All requests must first be vetted by the board's research department and the board's Mental Health Leader:

YES	NO	
		Has the researcher received approval from the research department?
		Has the board Mental Health Leader been informed about the research?
		I must have the consent and support of my school administrator.

Note: Sometimes you may have students conducting surveys as part of other learning (e.g., MDM4U). If students choose to focus on mental health for this assignment, review their survey carefully and contact a school mental health professional for input if you have any questions or concerns.

Additional Resources for Decision-making: For additional information and support please consult with your school administrator and/or a school mental health professional. Your Board Mental Health Leader is an excellent resource available to assist you in your planning.

SMH-ON School Mental Health Decision Support Tool: Student Mental Health Awareness Initiatives, including the following Appendices:

- Appendix A – Flowchart for Decision Making on Mental Health Initiatives in a School Board
- Appendix B – Suggested Interview Questions for Potential Mental Health Speakers
- Appendix C – Decision Support Tool for Mental Health Leaders
- Appendix D – Decision Support Reflection for School Staff

Re-developed with permission of the TVDSB



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