

# Student Mental Health in Action

## Help a Friend

### Table of Contents

<b>2</b>	<b>Lesson plan</b>
2	Overall expectations
3	Setting the stage
4	Minds On
4	Action task
7	Consolidation
7	Transition
8	Safety reminders and resources for students
<b>9</b>	<b>Appendix A</b>
9	Why it is Important to Learn to Help a Friend
<b>10</b>	<b>Appendix B</b>
10	Be There's 5 Golden Rules Facilitation Guide
<b>13</b>	<b>Appendix C</b>
13	Practice Scenario Script and Discussion Guide
<b>15</b>	<b>Extensions</b>
15	Extend the lesson for your class
16	Extend your learning as an educator
<b>17</b>	<b>Take care of yourself – educator mental health matters</b>





Grades 9 – 12

# Lesson plan

This is the fourth 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 identify a friend, or anyone else, in need of mental health support and how to connect them to help.

LEARNING GOALS	SUCCESS CRITERIA
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recognize when a friend needs mental health support</li> <li>• Use appropriate help-giving strategies to safely support a friend struggling with their mental health</li> <li>• Increase awareness of appropriate wellness strategies and boundaries when supporting a friend</li> </ul>	<p>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?”</p> <p><b>For example:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I can recognize when a friend is struggling with their mental health.</li> <li>• I know where to find mental health support for a friend.</li> <li>• I know steps to take to help a friend connect with mental health support.</li> <li>• I know how to care for myself as I help care for others.</li> </ul>
CONSIDERATIONS	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 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.</li> </ul>	



**CONSIDERATIONS** (continued)

- 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.
- 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-smsso.ca) (smho-smsso.ca)
  - [Talking with Parents and Families about Mental Health](https://smho-smsso.ca) (smho-smsso.ca)
  - [Circle of Support and System Pathways – Flowchart](https://smho-smsso.ca) (smho-smsso.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**

Remind students of the "ground rules" or shared norms established during [Lesson 1](#). For example:

- ▶ There is room for everyone to contribute, but you don't have to speak if you don't want to.
- ▶ Use thoughtful, non-stigmatizing language about mental health that makes everyone feel included.
- ▶ 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.

**Teacher prompt:** "As a reminder, 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

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This Minds On activity provides the opportunity to acknowledge and discuss the reluctance some students may feel about sharing the personal information of their friends.

**Teacher prompt:** “We’re talking about supporting a friend today, and sometimes that involves sharing a concern about a friend with someone else. I know this can feel very personal and you may worry about breaking a friend’s trust.”

Ask students to share differences between the following terms (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.

▶ **Secrecy** versus **Privacy**

- Secrecy involves not telling anyone information, even people who need it.
- Respecting privacy means sharing only the information needed and only with those who need it to help someone or keep them safe.

▶ **Snitching** versus **Informing**

- Snitching is sharing information to get someone into trouble.
- Informing is sharing facts and information to get someone out of trouble, keep someone safe, or seek needed help.

**Teacher prompt:** “We know how much students care about their friends and classmates. They want to know how to help a friend the right way. There are things you can do to listen and support when a friend is experiencing problems with their mental health, but it is important that you know you don’t have to do this alone. Sometimes students take on too much when a friend is hurting. Your main job is to help them get the support that they need.”

## ACTION TASK

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**Teacher prompt:** “There are many reasons we are having this lesson. For example, in previous lessons we talked about how common mental health concerns are and how many students don’t know where to go for support. We know students often share concerns with friends before they share them with an adult, and that many of you have supported a friend who was struggling with their mental health. We also know that, even though you want to help, students aren’t always sure what to do and research tells us that helping a friend is an area students want to learn more about. This lesson focuses on supporting others, and was developed in collaboration with Be There, an educational digital platform created by [Jack.org](http://Jack.org) on how to be there for someone struggling with their mental health. Following the lesson, you can learn more at [BeThere.org](http://BeThere.org).”

[Appendix A](#) provides data to support this prompt. You may wish to highlight data relevant for your class.



## When is it time to support a friend?

Think back to our [last lesson](#). The same signs that let you know when you need support can also be used for your friends. There's reason to be concerned about your friend's mental health when you notice a change in their behaviour that is **intense, long-lasting, and having a big impact** on their day-to-day life.

Ask yourself the following questions:

- ▶ Does my friend seem different from usual? Has there been a change in how they typically act (e.g., have they withdrawn from activities, friends, or other things they used to enjoy)?
- ▶ Is what's going on negatively affecting their daily routines, responsibilities, and relationships?
- ▶ Has it been going on for more than a couple of weeks?
- ▶ Are they dealing with their problems in unhealthy ways (e.g., taking part in risky or dangerous activities)?
- ▶ Are they carrying too much by themselves?

If you answered yes to any of these questions, your friend might be dealing with more than the usual ups and downs of life and may need some support. If you aren't sure if your friend needs help, check in with them. If you're not sure where to begin or feel you need to talk to someone, speak to a safe and supportive adult, such as a teacher, parent/guardian, relative, principal, coach, faith leader, Elder, or your family doctor. You can also call or text Kids Help Phone to discuss next steps in supporting your friend.

**Teacher prompt:** "Sometimes people don't show us how they are feeling for a variety of reasons, like they don't want us to be uncomfortable, they are trying to do what is expected of them, there is stigma, and so on. It's a great idea to check in with your friends every now and then, even if they seem to be doing okay."

## How can I support a friend?

**Teacher prompt:** "If you think a friend is struggling with their mental health or if a friend has the courage to reach out to you, the 5 Golden Rules from [BeThere.org](http://BeThere.org) can help you start the conversation, show you care, hear them out, set helpful boundaries, and connect them to help. You can use the 5 Golden Rules in any order, and you may move back and forth between them. It should feel like a conversation, not a recipe, and Be There's 5 Golden Rules aren't just for friends. You can use them with anyone you want to be there for."

Be There's 5 Golden Rules have been converted into a slide deck that introduces the rules and engages students in generating conversation starters for them (see [Appendix B](#) for the content). Following the activity, view a Be There video and engage in the reflection questions. Let students know that the videos feature real people and real stories. You may view all four videos or choose the number that works for your class (sharing two videos is suggested).

[Slide Deck](#)



**Be There Video Options:**

- ▶ [Jessie & Manvir – Say What You See](#) | BeThere.org – YouTube (2:18)
- ▶ [Kirbie & Estyr – Know Your Role](#) | BeThere.org – YouTube (2:46)
- ▶ [Maryam & Aswani – Connect to Help](#) | BeThere.org – YouTube (2:38)
- ▶ [Tunchai & Lindsay – Connect To Help](#) | BeThere.org – YouTube (2:47)

**Student reflection:**

- ▶ Which of Be There’s 5 Golden Rules did you see reflected in the video? How did you see them play out?
- ▶ What did the friend do well?
- ▶ What did you take from the video that you could use when supporting a friend?

**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).

**Optional Student Resource:**

- ▶ [5 Golden Rules Poster](#) (BeThere.org)

**Optional Educator Resource:**

- ▶ [Class Conversation Starters](#) for helping a friend (smho-smsso.ca; pages 15-24)

**Teacher prompt:** “It’s important to be there for others, and it’s also important to be there for yourself. This involves learning to recognize your limits and take care of yourself. After all, your mental health is just as important as anyone else’s! Be sure to check in with yourself, notice when you are struggling, know what you need to be healthy, and take the time to do it (including reaching out for support when you need it).”

**Optional Video:**

- ▶ [Lee – Be There for Yourself](#) | BeThere.org – YouTube (0:43)

**What supports are available?**

**Teacher prompt:** “There are things you can do to listen and support when a friend is struggling with their mental health, but it’s important that you know you don’t have to do this alone. The same help-seeking resources and services available to you can also be accessed for your friends.”

Remind students of [Resources Around Me](#) (kidshelpphone.ca) and the [Finding My Circle of Support worksheet](#) shared in the last lesson.

**Teacher prompt:** “Remember, if your friend has said or done something that makes you worry about their safety or the safety of anyone else, it’s important to let someone know right away, even if your friend asks you not to. If someone is in crisis, keeping them safe is your most important role. The best way to be a good friend is by getting them the help that they need.”



## CONSOLIDATION

The consolidation is a scenario that allows students to practice what they have learned. The scenario is available as a short video. [Appendix C](#) also provides the script and an educator discussion guide.

**Practice Scenario (In-Person) – YouTube**

**Practice Scenario (In-Person) – Vimeo**

**Practice Scenario (Virtual) – YouTube**

**Practice Scenario (Virtual) – Vimeo**

**Teacher prompt:** “We are going to put what we’ve learned today into practice.”

### Wrap up questions:

- ▶ What new information did you learn?
- ▶ Do you feel better equipped to support those around you and yourself?
- ▶ 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 have an important role to play in supporting our friends.
- ▶ Sometimes we need other people to play a role, too. We do not have to carry our concern for our friend alone.
- ▶ Even if our friend asks us not to, we need to seek support right away if there is a risk to their safety or anyone else’s.

## TRANSITION

### How can I be there for myself while being there for others?

Ask students to reflect on being there for others. How do they...

- ▶ Make sure they know their role and stay in it?
- ▶ Tune in to their capacity to help and how much time, energy, and emotional bandwidth they have available to offer?
- ▶ Check in on their own mental health?
- ▶ Decide what boundaries to set and what is off limits for them?
- ▶ Know when it is time to bring in others to help?
- ▶ Show themselves some love?

Reinforce the importance of taking care of ourselves and boundaries as we help others and remind students of the wellness strategies shared in previous lessons.



**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. Acknowledge that this was the last lesson in the series, but just like our physical health, we need to attend to our mental health every day.

### Tense and Relax – Muscle Relaxation Video

**Students who wish to continue their learning may refer to the following resources:**

- ▶ [How to take care of your mental health for students](#) (smho-smso.ca)
- ▶ [BeThere.org](#)
- ▶ [COVID-19 Youth Mental Health Resource Hub](#) (jack.org)
- ▶ [Personal Virtual Jack Talk – Overview](#) (jack.org)

## 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. Many of these supports are available year-round. Let students know who is available to help in their school, provide them with the additional resource list below, 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.**

This lesson was created in collaboration with Be There, a resource by Jack.org. If you would like to explore more resources for your classroom, visit [BeThere.org](#).





# Appendix A

## Why it is Important to Learn to Help a Friend

<p><b>Mental health concerns are common</b></p>	<p>21% of students indicated a serious level of psychological distress (symptoms of anxiety and depression).</p> <p><a href="#">Summary – OSDUHS Mental Health and Well-Being Report, 1991-2019</a> (camh.ca)</p>
<p><b>Many students don't know where to go for support.</b></p>	<p>35% of students reported that, in the past year, there was a time they wanted to talk to someone about a mental health problem but they did not know where to turn – this represents 348,700 Ontario students.</p> <p><a href="#">Summary – OSDUHS Mental Health and Well-Being Report, 1991-2019</a> (camh.ca)</p>
<p><b>Most young people have supported a friend with a mental health concern.</b></p>	<p>Of 1200 young people surveyed across Canada, 83% said they had supported a friend struggling with their mental health. Only 39% of them felt they were prepared to offer the support that was needed.</p> <p><a href="#">(BeThere.org)</a></p>
<p><b>Young people want to learn more about how to help a friend.</b></p>	<p>In the #HearNowON focus groups and survey, how to help a friend was one of the things secondary school students in Ontario said they wanted to learn most about.</p> <p><a href="#">#HearNowON: Student voices on mental health</a> (smho-smsso.ca)</p>





# Appendix B

## Be There's 5 Golden Rules Facilitation Guide

This action activity is also available on a [Slide Deck](#)

Provide some explanation of each of the 5 Golden Rules and invite your class to come up with ideas for conversation starters (examples are provided below).

Golden Rule	Purpose	Key Concepts	Conversation Starters
<b>Say What You See</b>	To learn how to break the ice and start the conversation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reach out when you notice something is different.</li> <li>Stick to the facts and don't make assumptions.</li> <li>Tell your friend the changes you've noticed, let them know you're concerned, and ask if they're ok.</li> <li>If you face resistance, don't take it personally. Remember, the conversation is about them, so go at their pace and validate how they're feeling.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Teacher Prompt:</b></p> <p>If you were concerned about a friend, how could you start the conversation?</p> <p><b>Options:</b></p> <p>"Hey, haven't heard from you in a while. How's it going? You doing alright?"</p> <p>"Hey I noticed _____, do you want to talk about it?"</p> <p>"You've been _____ a lot more/less than usual. I'm worried about you. How are you?"</p>
<b>Show You Care</b>	To learn how to build trust and support your friend	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Don't assume you know what your friend needs or what is best for them. Ask them. If they don't know, offer some suggestions.</li> <li>Create a safe environment by being inclusive, helpful, compassionate, and a good listener.</li> <li>Consider your tone of voice, body language, and actions. This shows you care and you're a safe person to talk to.</li> <li>Whenever possible, offer practical ways to help your friend get through their day.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Teacher Prompt:</b></p> <p>What could you say to show your friend support?</p> <p><b>Options:</b></p> <p>"I care about you. What can I do to help?"</p> <p>"What do you need?"</p> <p>"Would it be ok if we try _____ and see how it goes?"</p>



Golden Rule	Purpose	Key Concepts	Conversation Starters
<p><b>Hear Them Out</b></p>	<p>To learn how to be a good listener and balance the conversation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use active listening – listening in a way that helps a friend open up and feel heard.</li> <li>• Things like not interrupting, making eye contact, uncrossing your arms, and asking open ended questions can make a big difference. Putting away distractions like phones can help, too.</li> <li>• As your friend shares, keep the focus on them rather than yourself. Listen, ask questions, summarize what’s been said, and validate how they’re feeling.</li> <li>• Share your own experiences wisely and acknowledge that what worked for you may not work for everyone else.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Teacher Prompt:</b></p> <p>What could you say to help your friend open up and share how they feel?</p> <p><b>Options:</b></p> <p>“I hear you, that sounds super hard. Can you tell me more about that?”</p> <p>“How are you feeling now?”</p> <p>“Can you tell me more about that? I want to understand what’s going on for you.”</p>
<p><b>Know Your Role</b></p>	<p>To learn how to set boundaries to protect the relationship and your own mental health</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It’s natural to want to fix things, but that’s not your role.</li> <li>• Listen, offer support, and help connect your friend to appropriate resources.</li> <li>• If you’re not in the right frame of mind to have the conversation, that’s okay! Revisit it another time (as long as you feel there are no immediate safety concerns).</li> <li>• Setting and maintaining clear boundaries on things like your time, how you communicate, and what topics you talk about can help protect your friendship.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Teacher Prompt:</b></p> <p>How could you let a friend know when you need to set a boundary to care for yourself?</p> <p><b>Options:</b></p> <p>“It’s really late and we both need sleep, but we can talk more tomorrow.”</p> <p>“I care about you and I’m here for you. I need to take care of my mental health too, and there are some things I’m not comfortable talking about.”</p> <p>“I have to go to class this afternoon. I’ll check back in with you after.”</p> <p><b>Note:</b> if you think there is an immediate risk of harm to your friend or someone else, respond <b>right away</b> and make sure you connect with support, even if this means waking up a parent or guardian, or calling a crisis line.</p>



Golden Rule	Purpose	Key Concepts	Conversation Starters
<p><b>Connect to Help</b></p>	<p>To learn how to access professional and community resources</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Help your friend understand the services and resources available and what to expect. You can do research for them, help them prepare questions or goals, and help troubleshoot barriers like scheduling, transportation, and cost.</li> <li>• Each person’s experience with mental health services will be different. If a friend doesn’t ‘click’ with the first support, encourage them to keep trying.</li> <li>• If your friend refuses help but is not in crisis, follow up periodically. Encourage them to get help but don’t push too hard.</li> <li>• If they are in crisis, <b>connect to help right away</b>. Don’t carry this responsibility alone. It’s important to bring in others to support.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Teacher Prompt:</b></p> <p>How could you encourage a friend to connect with support?</p> <p><b>Options:</b></p> <p>“You’re not alone. Have you thought about talking to a professional or an adult you trust in your community?”</p> <p>“No pressure, but I found a few resources that might help.”</p> <p>“Do you want me to come with you?”</p> <p>“Who else do you trust that could help you work through this?”</p>





# Appendix C

## Practice Scenario Script and Discussion Guide

### SCRIPT

*For the past two weeks you've noticed a change in a classmate. They've been missing school more than usual, have stopped speaking up in class, and look very tired. You have also seen them blinking back tears a few times. You don't know them well and wonder if you should say anything. You also aren't feeling the best yourself. It has been a stressful year and you wonder if you have the energy to be there for someone else.*

#### Pause for discussion

*After class you connect with your classmate, tell them what you have noticed, and ask if they are okay. Your classmate tells you that they have been feeling really sad and alone, and they seem hopeless about the situation. You listen carefully, and the more you do, the more concerned you become. You offer to help your classmate find a supportive adult to talk to and to go with them, if they wish. Your classmate suddenly says they'll be fine and asks you to keep what they've said to yourself.*

#### Pause for discussion

*You repeat what you noticed and say you care. Your classmate says thanks, but don't worry about them and leaves for their next class.*

#### Pause for discussion

### DISCUSSION GUIDE

Teacher Prompts	Discussion Points
<p><b>First Pause</b></p> <p><b>Key Issues:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>You don't know your classmate well and wonder if you should approach them.</li> <li>You are also struggling yourself and not sure you can be there for someone else.</li> </ul> <p><b>Potential Questions:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Do you think it's okay to start a conversation?</li> <li>How would you do it?</li> <li>What would your role be?</li> <li>Who could help you?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>It's okay that you don't know them well. If you are around them enough to notice a change that concerns you, it's ok to say something.</li> <li>We all experience ups and downs and you don't have to be feeling your best to help someone else.</li> <li>In fact, recognizing your own struggles can sometimes help build empathy for what someone else is going through.</li> <li>That said, what we are going through can sometimes limit our time, energy, resiliency, and emotional capacity.</li> <li><b>Know your role</b>, set boundaries to take care of your own mental health, and bring in more help when you need to. You don't have to carry this alone.</li> </ul>



Teacher Prompts	Discussion Points
<p><b>Second Pause</b></p> <p><b>Key Issues:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Your classmate asks you not to tell anyone.</li> <li>Your classmate doesn't want help.</li> </ul> <p><b>Potential Questions:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What if your classmate doesn't want to talk?</li> <li>How would you handle the request to keep information to yourself?</li> <li>How might you keep the conversation going?</li> <li>Who could help you?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Say what you see</b>, stick to the facts, and avoid making any kind of judgement or assumption. It's enough to let them know you've noticed a change and that <b>you care</b>.</li> <li>If they want to talk, <b>hear them out</b>.</li> <li>If they don't want to talk, that's okay. Suggest resources such as Kids Help Phone and let them know you'll continue to <b>be there</b>, should they wish to talk.</li> <li>When facing resistance to seeking help, be sensitive to their past experiences and concerns. Try to understand the reason behind their reluctance. Don't push too hard; it often does the opposite of what you hope, and people pull away. Tell them again what makes you feel they need support.</li> <li>If they ask you not to tell: sometimes the concern may be specific, like they don't want you to tell their parents. In that case, maybe you can agree on someone else you can go to, such as a trusted adult at school.</li> <li>Explain that you can find a way to discreetly get them help. You can also say something like, "This is too important to keep secret," or "This feels too big for the two of us. We need extra help," and work to create a plan you're both comfortable with.</li> <li>Don't assume you have all the answers. Try to find a solution that works for your classmate.</li> <li>Ask what might help. Do they want you to go with them to speak to someone? Can you help them find services tailored to the needs and preferences of a population they identify with? Could you call an anonymous helpline for them as a first step to <b>connecting with help</b>?</li> </ul>
<p><b>Third Pause</b></p> <p><b>Key Issue:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>You think your classmate might really need support, but they are refusing help.</li> </ul> <p><b>Potential Questions:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Would you leave the situation alone at that point?</li> <li>What could you do if you had concerns?</li> <li>Who could help you?</li> <li>How could you care for yourself as you help care for someone else? What supports could you use?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>If your classmate still refuses help, you need to decide if you think they are safe.</li> <li>If you don't think there is immediate risk, continue to check in periodically.</li> <li>If you are concerned or aren't sure if they are safe, talk the situation through with an adult you trust.</li> <li>If you feel they are in crisis, <b>connect to help right away</b>. Find a caring adult at school and tell them what happened. If that's not possible, connect with another adult you trust or consider crisis helplines.</li> <li>It's important to respect people's privacy, but it's even more important to help keep them safe.</li> <li><b>Being there</b> can make a big difference in someone's life. Even things like asking how someone is doing and listening can mean a lot.</li> <li>It's important to care for yourself as you help care for your classmate. You can use wellness strategies, connect with the safe and supportive people in your life, or reach out to any of the resources we have discussed.</li> </ul>

Adapted from: [BeThere.org](https://www.bethere.org)





# Extensions

## Extend the lesson 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.

### Additional Be There videos

**Where it fits:** How can I support a friend? (action task)

- ▶ A variety of additional Be There videos showcasing the 5 Golden Rules are available at [BeThere.org](https://www.bethere.org) or access them in [this YouTube playlist](#).

**Note:** some videos contain sensitive personal disclosures. Videos should be previewed before sharing them with students.

### How to help a friend through a rough patch

**Where it fits:** How can I support a friend? (action task)

- ▶ Review [How to help a friend through a rough patch](#) (kidshelpphone.ca) and the suggestions regarding how to have a difficult conversation with a friend.
- ▶ Using the format that works best for your class, invite students to share strategies they have found helpful when approaching difficult conversations.

**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
<p>Access the <a href="#">School Mental Health Ontario Website</a> for additional ideas about how to support student mental health and well-being: Take your learning deeper with the <a href="#">educator mental health literacy course</a> developed collaboratively by School Mental Health Ontario and Wilfrid Laurier University. It's free and available online.</p>	<p>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.</p> <p><a href="#">HearNowON Student voice summary of findings</a></p> <p>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.</p>	<p>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.</p>	<p>Continue to bring mental health and well-being into your classroom. There are a variety of resources available to assist you.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Secondary Virtual Field Trip – Visualization</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Anxiety Management and Coping Social Media Bundles for Secondary Students</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Social Emotional Learning Posters for Secondary Students</a></li> </ul>



# 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 self-care 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  
\(smho-smso.ca\)](https://smho-smso.ca)

[Personal Resiliency Tips  
During the COVID-19  
Pandemic \(smso-smso.ca\)](https://smho-smso.ca)

[Coping with  
Stress and Anxiety  
\(camh.ca\)](https://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.

