

Student Mental Health in Action

Know Yourself

Table of Contents

| | |
|-----------|---|
| 2 | Lesson plan |
| 2 | Overall expectations |
| 3 | Setting the stage |
| 3 | Minds On |
| 4 | Action task |
| 6 | Consolidation |
| 7 | Transition |
| 8 | Safety reminders and resources for students |
| 9 | Appendix A |
| 9 | The Mental Health and Well-Being of Ontario Students |
| 14 | Appendix B |
| 14 | My Mental Health Cues |
| 15 | Extensions |
| 15 | Extend the lesson for your class |
| 16 | Extend your learning as an educator |
| 17 | Take care of yourself – educator mental health matters |





Grades 9 – 12

Lesson plan

This is the second 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 monitor and support their mental health and well-being so they can experience better overall health, quality of life, and school success.

| LEARNING GOALS | SUCCESS CRITERIA |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Describe factors that can impact mental health. • Recognize indicators of their mental health. • Demonstrate an increased understanding of how to support their mental health. • Differentiate healthy from unhealthy coping strategies. | <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>For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I can recognize factors that may impact my mental health. • I can practice, observe, and apply healthy strategies to support my mental health and well-being. |
| CONSIDERATIONS | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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. • 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. | |



CONSIDERATIONS (continued)

- 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

Ontario students’ mental health and well-being: The Minds On is an interactive quiz that shares information about the mental health and well-being of Ontario students. The questions, answers, and notes to support a discussion are available in [Appendix A](#) and the quiz is also available as a slide deck and Kahoot 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. You may share all the information provided or select what is most relevant for your students.

Teacher prompt: “We’re going to learn about the mental health and well-being of Ontario students through the [Ontario Student Drug Use and Health Survey \(OSDUHS\)](#). The OSDUHS is a survey that has been given to Ontario students every two years since 1977. In 2021, 2,225 students in grades 7-12 participated. The survey was completed after COVID-19 began. As we review the results, think about what they might be today”

Following each question, use the notes to engage in a discussion. [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.



Factors that influence our mental health

Ask students to share factors they think influence our 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. Once students have generated ideas, note there are many factors, including but not limited to:

- ▶ Our relationships and supports (e.g., conflict with parents/guardians or siblings)
- ▶ Our environment (e.g., do we have a safe place to live and learn?)
- ▶ Our physical health, genetics, and biology
- ▶ Our access to health care and other resources
- ▶ Traumatic experiences (e.g., systemic racism, transphobia, the impact of war)
- ▶ Day to day pressures and stressors
 - Academic pressure
 - Job pressure
 - Peer pressure
 - Balancing all the expectations people have of us
 - Change and transitions (even ones we are looking forward to, such as graduation)
- ▶ A combination of these

Teacher prompt: “One current stressor is COVID-19, which is playing a role in the mental health and well-being of many people. While stress can be a good thing that helps motivate us and keep us safe, we aren’t meant to live with it for such a long time and many of us aren’t feeling our best right now. It’s important to be kind to ourselves and each other, recognize and respect each other’s different experiences, and acknowledge the strength we’ve shown over the past year.”

Note that culture also informs the way mental health is understood (educators should be aware that diverse groups are obviously not homogeneous and there are many complex intersections that inform diverse understandings of mental health). Acknowledge that students may also have heard that some groups of people are at higher risk of mental illness than others.

Teacher prompt: “When we talk about certain groups being at higher risk of mental illness, we need to be clear that it is because of the life experiences those groups often have. There is nothing inherent in being a member of the groups we often talk about, such as Indigenous peoples, people who identify as 2SLGBTQI+, people who are underhoused or homeless, or people who are racialized that puts them at higher risk. It’s the way they are often treated that is the issue. For example, they may be regularly exposed to violence, discrimination, and stigma; they may have experienced historical trauma, and so on. In addition, just because someone belongs to a certain group doesn’t mean they will develop a mental illness, or that they will have any or all of the experiences discussed. We need to consider each person individually rather than making assumptions.”



Student Reflection:

- ▶ How have the following influences shaped your views on mental health? What have you learned about mental health from them?
 - Your family, friends, and community
 - School experiences
 - The media and popular culture
- ▶ Has COVID-19 had an impact? For example, has it influenced the way you look at mental health and what you need to feel well?
- ▶ What are some things you have learned from these different influences that support your mental health (strategies, practices, ideas)?

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).

My mental health cues

This Action Task provides students with an opportunity to reflect on indicators of their personal mental health and ways to support it. [Appendix B](#) is provided to help guide the discussion.

Teacher prompt: “We’re going to take time to privately reflect on your own mental health. How do you know where you are on the mental health continuum? How do you think, feel, and act when your mental health is good versus when it is not? Record your mental health cues on the worksheet provided. You can use the examples or come up with ideas of your own. Your cues may be different from someone else’s, and that’s okay. Remember, this activity isn’t meant to help you diagnose mental illness. It’s meant to help you recognize when it’s time to care for your mental health and reach out for support. The worksheet also has space for healthy ways you can help move your mental health when it’s not where you want it to be.”

Note: the worksheet is not for submission. It is for personal reflection only. Should you wish, you may invite students to share some of their go-to strategies for good mental health as this would be appropriate content for discussion with the larger group.

My mental health cues – Worksheet

Let students know they may refer to the well-being handouts provided in [Lesson 1](#) for strategy ideas, if they wish. Note that knowing healthy ways to support your mental health can help you avoid unhealthy ones, such as:

- ▶ Using substances (e.g., caffeine, nicotine, cannabis, alcohol) to cope with difficult feelings and experiences; engagement in using substances that gets in the way of other activities that have been important to you
- ▶ Using activities such as shopping, social media, or video games to cope with difficult feelings and experiences; engagement in shopping, social media, or video games that gets in the way of other activities that have been important to you
- ▶ Withdrawing from friends, family, or activities you enjoy
- ▶ Avoiding or denying what is bothering you
- ▶ Using food or sleep in unbalanced ways



Teacher prompt: “When deciding if a behaviour is healthy for you, ask yourself if it fits with your values, goals, and the plans you have for your life. Does the behaviour support what is important to you, or get in the way of it? Does it get in the way of learning other strategies that might help support you better? If you are engaging in any behaviour that puts your safety at risk, it’s time to think about building other coping strategies into your life.”

There are also some strategies that have been identified as supporting our well-being specifically during COVID-19. These include:

- ▶ Maintaining a safe level of physical activity
- ▶ Spending less free time on digital screens
- ▶ Maintaining or increasing sleep quality and length
- ▶ Going outside once or more a day (if you feel safe to do so)
- ▶ Talking to a friend about how you are feeling
- ▶ Increasing quality family time

Optional resources:

- ▶ [Class Conversation Starters](#) for handling stress (smho-smso.ca; pages 35-42)
- ▶ Video: [Mood Matters: How Food, Movement & Sleep Can Have an Impact on You – YouTube \(4 Minutes\)](#)

Student reflection:

Think about the messaging around us regarding our physical health and how to support it (e.g., commercials, guidelines such as Canada’s Food Guide, and so on).

- ▶ Do we receive similar information about our mental health and its importance?
- ▶ Is this changing over time? Have you noticed changes since you were younger? Have you noticed changes from before COVID-19 to now?

CONSOLIDATION

Taking care of our mental health involves:

- ▶ Knowing and noticing the signs that we’re not feeling well
- ▶ Knowing the things (strategies, people, places, activities, habits) that make us feel healthier
- ▶ Taking steps to put those things in place and to ask for support when we need it

Optional discussion: Ask students to reflect on physical health again. If we want to feel physically healthier, how do we approach exercise? Discuss how we often build exercise routines, set goals for practice, talk about strategies with others, seek coaching, and so on. We know we need to build healthy habits and practice them regularly to be at our best physically.

Teacher prompt: “Just like with our physical health, we need to practice good mental health habits regularly, too, and it’s helpful to do so when we feel calm and safe. Then, at times when life is more challenging, we can lean on these habits to help us through.”



Student Reflection:

- ▶ Ask students to share ideas about how they might make healthy coping strategies part of their daily lives. For example:
 - Find a partner and check in regularly with each other
 - Practice a strategy at the same time each day so it becomes routine
 - Make a strategy/goal the password to their devices so they are reminded of it
 - Keep a journal to record progress
 - Pair a strategy with another activity they do regularly, such as brushing their teeth

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 know the year has been a challenging one – we are here to help.
- ▶ We can take care of our mental health, just like we take care of our physical health.
- ▶ We can't eliminate stress or challenges all together, but we can give ourselves resources to help manage them.

TRANSITION**Stress management**

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

Activity

- ▶ [12 Instant Stress Busters \(kidshelpphone.ca\)](https://www.kidshelpphone.ca)
- ▶ [Six Ways to Practice Self-Care \(camh.ca\)](https://www.camh.ca)

Student reflection:

- ▶ Ask students to review the handout(s), reflect on the strategies they use, and consider the following questions:
 - How have your preferred strategies been impacted by COVID-19?
 - How can you adapt them, given our current context?
- ▶ Ask students to choose one strategy to use that day.



Teacher prompt: “Your strategy doesn’t have to be big or take a lot of time or money. Even small things like taking a few deep breaths, getting some fresh air, or dialing down social media use can help if we practice them regularly. What works is different for everyone and can change over time or from moment to moment. And remember, sometimes reaching out to a friend, safe adult, or professional support is the best way we can take care of ourselves.”

Optional student resources for deeper learning:

- ▶ [Anxiety management and coping social media bundles for secondary students](#) (smho-smso.ca)
- ▶ [Tips for staying connected during COVID-19](#) (kidshelpphone.ca)
- ▶ [Kids Help Phone’s top 3 wellness tips for newcomers](#) (kidshelpphone.ca)

Educator resource:

- ▶ [Tips for educators to help students manage stress during uncertain times](#) (smho-smso.ca)

Optional video: Provide the class a guided practice video 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 when the next lesson is coming and the topic (how to find help for yourself).

Finding Calm – Guided Breathing 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. 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.





Appendix A

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

The Mental Health and Well-Being of Ontario Students

| # | QUESTION | ANSWER OPTIONS | DATA | OPTIONAL DISCUSSION NOTES |
|---|---|------------------------------------|---|--|
| 1 | How many students got an hour or more of physical activity a day? | 13% 42% 64% 21% (correct) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 21% of students met the recommended daily physical activity guidelines (defined as a total of at least 60 minutes of moderate-to-vigorous activity per day) during the past seven days. 12% were physically inactive every day for the past week. Additional recent data also tells us that both physical activity and outside time decreased during the pandemic (Source: Moore, 2020). | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> We know being physically active presents challenges. What are some of the barriers? What are some ways we could be creative about getting physical activity, given our current context? |
| 2 | How many students spent three or more hours a day of their free time on a screen? | 83% (correct) 71% 36% 58% | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 83% of students spent three hours or more of their free time each day in front of a screen. The majority of secondary school students (52%) spent five hours or more each day on electronic devices in their free time. 24% played video games for five hours or more per day. 31% spent five hours or more on social media daily. As you might expect, data tells us that screen usage increased during the pandemic (Source: Moore, 2020). | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Even before the pandemic, students were spending a lot of time on screens. We know screens can be very useful. We just need to be mindful of the impact they may have and try to take care of ourselves the best that we can. How can we try to balance out all the screen time we are getting? |



| # | QUESTION | ANSWER OPTIONS | DATA | OPTIONAL DISCUSSION NOTES |
|---|---|--|---|---|
| 3 | How many students were getting enough sleep on school nights? | 16% 32% 49% (correct) 61% | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 49% of students reported they usually get eight hours or more of sleep on an average school night (meaning 51% do not). However, during the pandemic sleep time was actually found to increase among children and youth (Source: Moore, 2020). | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> What is your sleep like now? Are you getting more sleep than before the pandemic? Or less? Is it the same quality? |
| 4 | Which are students more likely to rate as good to excellent, their physical or their mental health? | Physical health (correct) Mental health | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 16% of students rated their physical health as excellent, 34% rated it as very good, and 29% rated it as good. 20% rated it as fair or poor. * Equals 99% due to rounding 13% of students rated their mental health as excellent, 21% rated it as very good, and 29% rated it as good. 38% rated it as fair or poor. * Equals 101% due to rounding | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Think about how much we talk and learn about our physical health versus our mental health. Do you think that might be involved in the results? How many students do you think would say their mental health is good to excellent right now, given our circumstances? |



| # | QUESTION | ANSWER OPTIONS | DATA | OPTIONAL DISCUSSION NOTES |
|---|---|------------------------------------|---|--|
| 5 | How many students reported symptoms of psychological distress? | 26% (correct) 35% 44% 61% | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More than a quarter (26%) of students reported serious psychological distress. 20% of students reported harming themselves on purpose in the past year, while 18% of students reported serious thoughts about suicide. Another Ontario study found that 47% of trans people age 16-24 had considered suicide recently. (Source: Health Equity Impact Assessment - LGBTQ Populations gov.on.ca) • 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). There have also been increases in some specific child and youth mental health concerns, such as eating disorders (Sources: Toulany, 2022; Agostino, 2021). The pandemic has been a challenging time for many of us. The long-term effects of the pandemic on our mental health are still being studied. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Many people experience mental health concerns (both before the pandemic and now), yet it can feel very isolating. There is help available at school or in your community. If you think you need help, ask. • How can we create a space where people with mental health concerns feel less alone and more ready to ask for help when they need it? • Note: when we talk about certain groups having high rates of mental illness, it's important to remember that it is because of the life experiences those groups often have. |
| 6 | How many students felt they had a good ability to cope with problems? | 21% 34% (correct) 56% 72% | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Over one-third of students rated their ability to cope with unexpected and difficult problems as excellent or very good. • The same number rated their ability as fair or poor (34%). | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What do students need to build their coping skills? What would be helpful? |



| # | QUESTION | ANSWER OPTIONS | DATA | OPTIONAL DISCUSSION NOTES |
|---|--|------------------------------------|--|---|
| 7 | How many students talked to a parent/caregiver about their problems or feelings? | 61% (correct) 23% 52% 83% | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 61% of students reported that they “always,” “usually,” or “sometimes” talked to a parent/caregiver about their problems or feelings while 39% did so “rarely” or “never.” About 35% of students reported that COVID-19 made their relationship with their parent/guardian better, while 41% said it did not change and 24% said it got worse. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> In addition to family members, there are other caring adults around students, like teachers, coaches, Elders, and even mental health professionals and other supports in the community. Support is also just a help line away. |
| 8 | How many students wanted to talk to someone about their mental health but didn’t know the resources available? | 18% 42% (correct) 22% 35% | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 42% of students reported that, in the past year, there was a time they wanted to talk to someone about a mental health problem but did not know where to turn. This increased with the onset of the pandemic. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Many students don’t know the help available. There are free mental health supports at school and in the community. Talk to a school staff member about getting mental health help at school or check out Kid’s Help Phone’s Resources Around Me for virtual or in-person supports in your community. The third and fourth lessons in this series also focus on help-seeking. How could we make supports more visible in our school? Note: educators may wish to specifically mention local resources that are available in their school and community. |
| 9 | What percentage of students report that they like school? | 76% (correct) 10% 26% 49% | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 3 in 4 students reported liking school (42% like school very much or quite a lot; 34% like school to some degree). | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> What do you like best about school? Was it the same for face-to-face and online learning? Did the pandemic change how you feel about school? |



| # | QUESTION | ANSWER OPTIONS | DATA | OPTIONAL DISCUSSION NOTES |
|----|---|------------------------------------|---|--|
| 10 | What percentage of students feel safe in their school? | 76% 54% 91% (correct) 67% | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Most students feel safe in their school. However, for a while school took place at home for most students and that experience was different for all of us. We also know that some students may not experience school as a safe place because of experiences of racism, bullying, difficulty with learning, and so on. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> What kinds of things help you feel safe school? Is it the people, the way the physical environment is set up, messaging about how to treat each other, or something else? How can we all contribute to creating supportive spaces at school where everyone feels they belong? |
| 11 | How many students feel close to people at their school? | 46% 74% (correct) 85% 58% | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 74% of students felt close to people at their school and 74% also felt like they were part of their school. These numbers both decreased from 2019 to 2021 (in 2019 they were 85% and 82%, respectively). A sense of closeness and belonging is great for our mental health. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A sense of closeness and belonging is great for our mental health, but in many cases the pandemic impacted our chances to connect with each other. For some, it may take a little time to feel comfortable being with others at school again, but practice will help. If the pandemic contributed to students feeling disconnected from their school, what could help them feel part of their school community again? |





Appendix B

My Mental Health Cues

This activity is available for students as a **worksheet**

| How do I... | When My Mental Health is Good... | When I'm struggling with my mental health... |
|--------------|--|--|
| Think | <p>Example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can concentrate, make decisions, and solve problems • Generally positive thoughts about myself as a person • Notice both disappointments and good things in my life | <p>Example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trouble concentrating, making decisions, and solving problems • Can't think straight • Blame myself for everything • Think negative thoughts about myself, my life, the world, the future |
| Feel | <p>Example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Generally happy and content • Have things I enjoy • Look forward to things in my life • Have fun with my friends • Have energy to do what I need to do in my day | <p>Example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not interested in anything • Nothing seems fun • Feel there is nothing to look forward to • Very unhappy, worried, guilty, fearful, irritable, sad, numb, or angry • Cry easily/often • Headaches, stomach aches, general aches and pains • Tired all the time, feel burned out |
| Act | <p>Example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Talk to and spend time with my friends • Can manage my schoolwork • Able to get along with others • Can handle everyday challenges • Can move on from disappointments • Can relax when I have the opportunity • Can ask for help when I need it | <p>Example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trouble getting along with friends • Sleeping and eating habits are off • Over-react to things • Don't do as well at school as usual • Avoid school or work • Avoid people, spend time alone • Stop sports or other activities I usually enjoy • More substance use than usual |

Note: this activity is not a diagnostic tool. It is meant to help students think about their mental health like their physical health, and how they can recognize and respond to cues that it's time to use coping strategies and potentially reach out for support.





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, access additional Action Activities to extend the lesson.

Culture and Mental Health

Where it fits: Factors that influence our mental health

- ▶ Review [Youth story: On cultural perceptions of mental health \(kidshelpphone.ca\)](https://www.kidshelpphone.ca/youth-story-on-cultural-perceptions-of-mental-health)
- ▶ Ask students to share their thoughts and experiences related to culture and mental health (being mindful not to disclose personal mental health concerns) orally, through creative writing, or other options that suit your class. Encourage thoughtful, non-stigmatizing language and remind students that anything concerning will be followed-up so everyone is safe. Acknowledge that everyone has a different story, even those from the same cultural background, and all experiences are valid.

Note: this activity is not for the purpose of assessment. It is for reflection and discussion only.

Understanding Your Window of Tolerance

Where it fits: My mental health cues action task

- ▶ Review [Understanding your window of tolerance for stress \(kidshelpphone.ca\) and reflect on the questions provided.](https://www.kidshelpphone.ca/understanding-your-window-of-tolerance-for-stress-and-reflect-on-the-questions-provided)

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 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.</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>HearNowON Student voice summary of findings</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"> • 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 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)

[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.

