



Grade 8: Lesson 1

Routines & Habits for Mental Health

Optional Mentor texts: The Boy Who Built a Wall Around Himself – Ali Redford
Ruby Finds a Worry – Tom Percival
Teacup – Rebecca Young
Surviving the City – Tasha Spillett

Time: Lesson – 1 period
Extension – 2 periods

OVERALL EXPECTATIONS:

A1. apply, to the best of their ability, a range of social-emotional learning skills as they acquire knowledge and skills in connection with the expectations in the Healthy Living strand for this grade.

D2. demonstrate the ability to apply health knowledge and social-emotional learning skills to make reasoned decisions and take appropriate actions relating to their personal health and well-being.

SPECIFIC EXPECTATIONS:

A1.1 apply skills that help them identify and manage emotions as they participate in learning experiences in health and physical education, in order to improve their ability to express their own feelings and understand and respond to the feelings of others.

A1.2 apply skills that help them to recognize sources of stress and to cope with challenges, including help-seeking behaviours, as they participate in learning experiences in health and physical education, in order to support the development of personal resilience.

A1.3 apply skills that help them develop habits of mind that support positive motivation and perseverance as they participate in learning experiences in health and physical education, in order to promote a sense of optimism and hope.

A1.6 apply skills that help them think critically and creatively as they participate in learning experiences in health and physical education, in order to support making connections, analysing, evaluating, problem solving, and decision making.

D 2.4 demonstrate an understanding of how incorporating healthy habits and coping strategies into daily routines (e.g., starting the day with physical activity, limiting screen time before going to bed, using tools such as online apps to support mindful practices, using deep breathing and grounding strategies, engaging in activities that involve positive social interaction and supporting others) can help maintain mental health and resilience in times of stress.



LEARNING GOALS:

We are learning...

- to look at, explore and practise a range of strategies (emotional, social, intellectual, spiritual, physical) to support our mental health.
- to develop an understanding of the importance of practices to help manage stress and maintain our mental health.

SUCCESS CRITERIA:

Consider using these questions to co-develop success criteria with your students:
“How will we know we are achieving our learning goals? What will that look like/sound like?”

Sample success criteria to help guide you

- I can understand the importance of having healthy habits to maintain my mental health.
- I can identify what healthy strategies help support my mental health.
- I can identify when I may need to use my strategies to maintain my mental health.

MATERIALS & RESOURCES NEEDED:

Lesson

- Whiteboard / Chart paper – somewhere to record answers
- 3 images/items that help maintain your mental health
- “Healthy Habits Toolboxes” handout (provided)

Extension

- “My Toolbox” poster (provided)
- “My Toolbox” exemplar (provided)
- Markers/Pencil Crayons

CONSIDERATIONS:

- Approaches to all instruction, including Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) skills, must be mediated through respectful conversations about students’ lived realities, inequity, bias, discrimination and harassment.



Cross Curricular Expectations

NOTE: Language expectations are met when adding the optional extension task. If you are not using, then ignore.

Health & Physical Education	Language
<p style="text-align: center;">Social Emotional Learning Skills – Specific Expectations</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Strand A</p> <p>A1.6 apply skills that help them identify and manage emotions as they participate in learning experiences in health and physical education, in order to improve their ability to express their own feelings and understand and respond to the feelings of others</p> <p>A1.2 apply skills that help them to recognize sources of stress and to cope with challenges, including help-seeking behaviours, as they participate in learning experiences in health and physical education, in order to support the development of personal resilience</p> <p>A1.3 apply skills that help them develop habits of mind that support positive motivation and perseverance as they participate in learning experiences in health and physical education, in order to promote a sense of optimism and hope</p> <p>A1.6 apply skills that help them think critically and creatively as they participate in learning experiences in health and physical education, in order to support making connections, analysing, evaluating, problem solving, and decision making</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Reading – Specific Expectations</p> <p>1.3 Comprehension Strategies Identify a variety of reading comprehension strategies and use them appropriately before, during, and after reading to understand texts (e.g. activate prior knowledge, ask questions, make and confirm predictions based on evidence from the text, synthesize ideas)</p> <p>1.5 Making Inferences Make inferences about texts using stated and implied ideas from the texts as evidence</p> <p>1.6 Extending Understanding Extend understanding of texts by connecting the ideas in them to their own knowledge, experience and insights, to other familiar texts, and to the world around them</p> <p>1.7 Analysing Texts Analysing texts and explain how specific elements in them contribute to meaning</p> <p>1.8 Responding To and Evaluating Texts Express opinions about the ideas and information in texts and cite evidence from the text to support their opinions</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Healthy Living – Specific Expectations</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Strand D</p> <p>D2.4 Demonstrate an understanding of how incorporating healthy habits and coping strategies into daily routines (e.g., starting the day with physical activity, limiting screen time before going to bed, using tools such as online apps to support mindful practices, using deep breathing and grounding strategies, engaging in activities that involve positive social interaction and supporting others) can help maintain mental health and resilience in times of stress</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Media Literacy – Specific Expectations</p> <p>3.4 Produce some short media texts for specific purposes and audiences, using a few simple media forms and appropriate conventions and techniques (e.g., a sign or poster for their classroom or the school)</p>



Lesson

Minds On – 5 minutes

Begin this lesson by showing students 3 items/images that help you with maintaining positive mental health. For example, pictures of family, a book and the beach. (Other ideas: images of people being physically active, sleeping, reading, nature, etc.)

Ask students, “What do you think these items/images represent?” (Students may say your family, reading and being somewhere warm)

Tell students that the purpose of the lesson today is to recognize ways we can establish and maintain routines and habits that help support our mental health. We all experience good days and bad days. We also have days that offer us a range of experiences! It is important to have strategies to help us when we need them. It is also important to find out what works best for us. Remind students that different strategies work for different people and that there is no one way that works for everyone.

Action Task – 25 minutes

Suggested Teacher Prompt: (*Ontario Curriculum, Health and Physical Education, 2019, p285*)

“Maintaining mental health involves using strategies that help balance the different aspects of life: the physical, intellectual, social, emotional, and spiritual. It involves thinking, feeling, acting, and interacting in ways that allow you to enjoy life and cope with challenges that arise.

How can incorporating healthy coping strategies into daily routines help us maintain mental health and remain resilient in times of stress? And, when would you consider reaching out to a trusted adult?” [SEL 1.1, 1.2, 1.3]

Possible Student examples:

“Incorporating daily coping strategies involves planning ahead so you are not just reacting when things go wrong. I think it helps us manage stress overall, so that maybe we respond better to challenging situations. Self-care needs to be a priority. It’s not selfish to take care of yourself! If I still feel that the stress is too much, I would ask for help.”

Suggested Teacher Prompt: (*Ontario Curriculum, Health and Physical Education, 2019, p286*)

“The transition from elementary school to high school can be stressful. What are some things that you are doing or could do to lessen the stress?” [SEL 1.6]

Possible student examples:

“I know our class is going to visit the high school and that there are programs where you can go early in August to have a walk-through. That will help, I think.”

“I know a few people – like my brother and a friend in my building – who are already in high school. It helps to know I can talk with them and ask questions about what it’s like.”



Suggested Teacher Prompt: (*Ontario Curriculum, Health and Physical Education, 2019, p286*)

“When we continue to explore and gather a variety of strategies to support our mental health, over time we build a ‘toolbox’ of strategies that allows us to take better care of ourselves.

Different things work for different people in different situations, and these can change over time. You have to find the way that works best for you.

Some First Nations people smudge, a practice in which people fan smoke from herbal medicines like sage or sweetgrass over their bodies to cleanse themselves, in order to restore balance, emotionally, mentally, spiritually, and physically.

What are some of the strategies that you might incorporate into your life to support your mental health?” [SEL 1.2, 1.3, 1.6]

Possible Student example:

“I think that having a plan for my week ahead helps me to stay focused on what I need to take care of myself.”

“I make sure I give myself time to be active and to get outside.”

“I like to do some of these things with my friends, because it makes it more fun and I’m more motivated to actually do it!”

“I try to turn my device off at night and have some quiet time before I go to bed. Doing that helps me sleep better. It also means I’m less tired and less rushed in the morning, which makes my day go smoother.”

Activity:

Put students in pairs or small groups and have them complete “Healthy Habits Toolboxes” handout. Explain to students they can brainstorm strategies they can try for each category. [SEL 1.2, 1.6]

Consolidate – 10 Minutes

Bring the group back together and take up what they put into their toolboxes together and discuss their answers.

Create a master list with your students and their answers. Some answers could be:

Physical – sleep, rest, physical activity, stretching, walking, healthy foods, favourite sport activity, doing a hobby you enjoy, yoga, deep breathing

Intellectual – time management (e.g., making a plan), positive workspace, new learning, making time for a break, reading

Social – support systems, taking action (e.g., writing a letter, joining a march) to raise awareness about social injustices, positive social media, communication, time with family, time with friends, asking for help, knowing boundaries, spend time with your pet

Emotional – stress management, forgiveness, compassion, kindness, gratitude, honouring your true self

Spiritual – time alone, meditations, being out in nature, journaling, going to a sacred place, yoga, online apps for mindfulness, breathing techniques



Optional Extension Task – 80 minutes

1. **Choose** an optional Mentor Text that will best fit your needs.
2. **Read** text.
3. **Go** over the task with your students. The instructions attached will work for any of the activities.

TASK:

Create an “I Will” poster reviewing important information about what they have learned about themselves and how they can have their own toolbox of helpful mental health strategies. Students can use the computer or draw their poster. Feel free to use the handout graphic organizer provided or students can create their own.

OPTIONAL: Consider providing students with a choice of how they would like to communicate about their toolbox of helpful mental health strategies. This will provide students with the opportunity to share what they learned about themselves in a way that may highlight their strengths or talents. Listed below are **two possible ideas**. Ask your students how they might like to share their learning.

- **Create a personalized mental health toolbox:** Decorate a shoe box with images, colours, words that bring you joy, calm, positive feelings. Inside the box put artifacts or items that represent the tools in their ‘toolbox’. For example – an acorn could represent spending time in nature, a favourite quote or saying that inspires you, a photo of your pet, etc.
- **Write a song:** Compose lyrics and/or music that communicate your most helpful mental health strategies. Could your song also inspire other youth to learn more about supporting their own mental health? Two free digital tools to support song writing would be Chrome Music Lab (Songmaker), or MixLab.

Overview of the books suggested:

THE BOY WHO BUILT A WALL AROUND HIMSELF

Boy built a wall to keep himself safe. Behind it he felt strong and more protected. Then Someone Kind came along. She bounced a ball, sang and painted on the other side of the wall, and Boy began to wonder if life on the other side might be better after all. This gentle full-colour picture book uses a simple metaphor to explain how children who have had painful or traumatic experiences can build barriers between themselves and other people. It will help children explore their feelings and encourage communication.



RUBY FINDS A WORRY

Meet Ruby--a happy, curious, imaginative girl. But one day, she finds something unexpected: a Worry. It's not such a big Worry, at first. But every day, it grows a little bigger...And a little bigger...Until eventually, the Worry is ENORMOUS and is all she can think about. But when Ruby befriends a young boy, she discovers that everyone has worries, and not only that, there's a great way to get rid of them too. The **Big Bright Feelings** picture books provide kid-friendly entry points into emotional intelligence topics--from being true to yourself, to worrying, to anger management, to making friends. These topics can be difficult to talk about. But these books act as sensitive and reassuring springboards for conversations about mental and emotional health, positive self-image, building self-confidence, and managing feelings.

TEACUP

A boy has to leave his home and sets off on a journey into the unknown with a backpack, a book, a bottle, a blanket and a teacup filled with the earth from his homeland. His life at sea changes daily. Some days the sea is gentle and other days it is rough and unforgiving. Some days the light is bright and some nights are so dark he wishes to see the stars. He listens to the call of the whales and watches changing cloud formations. One day a sprout appears in his teacup. It grows into a tree that gives him shelter, apples to eat and branches to climb so he can search the horizon for land. The boy finally finds land and he makes it home.

SURVIVING THE CITY

Tasha Spillett, who is Nehiyaw and Trinidadian, tells the story through the dialogue and text messages between two girls – featuring Indigenous words and references to traditional practices – allowing readers to be continually immersed in their world.

Métis artist Natasha Donovan's full-colour illustrations stand out in this field of graphic novels, with pale-blue ghostly figures representing missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls, as well as darker, hollow-eyed male figures who symbolize the constant threats to women. In these haunting images, the girls' personal drama plays out within the larger struggle of Canada's Indigenous women.

Suggested Mentor Texts and Guides

THE BOY WHO BUILT A WALL AROUND HIMSELF

Before Reading:

Today I am going to read a book to you called "The Boy Who Build a Wall Around Himself". Before we start reading, why would you think the boy built a wall around himself?

As I read, I want you to think about the boy and what he must be feeling throughout the book and what broke down his barriers to help him develop positive mental health strategies.

During Reading:

Feel free to pause at any point to discuss what is happening in the story or check for understanding.



After Reading:

The boy began his book with some sad mental health habits. What changed?

What healthy habits did he learn?

What are some things you liked about this book?

What did the book symbolize for you?

Assign the poster task.

RUBY FINDS A WORRY

Before Reading:

Purpose of reading today is to listen to the story and hear the strategies that Ruby used to create her healthy mental health habits. Think about a time when you had a worry about something, how did you feel? What did you do about it?

During Reading:

Feel free to pause at any point to discuss what is happening in the story or check for understanding.

After Reading:

What happened to Ruby's worry as the story progressed?

What are some of the ways Ruby incorporated healthy habits and coping strategies into her daily routines?

Some messages are:

- The best way to get rid of a worry is to talk about it. Find someone you trust and share what you are thinking and feeling.
- Everyone has worries. You are not alone in how you are feeling. Others may understand what you are going through, and you can find comfort in shared experiences.
- You can establish healthy mental health routines and strategies to help when you are not feeling like yourself.

Who are people you can talk to? (trusted adult, mom, dad, sibling, friend, Kids Help Phone, coach, etc.)

Assign the poster task.



TEACUP

Before Reading:

Today I am going to read a book called “Teacup” by Rebecca Young. The book tells a tale about a young boy who must leave what is familiar and undertake a journey across a vast expanse of water in search of a new home. All he brings with him is a teacup filled with soil from his homeland. What predictions can you make about the book?

During Reading:

Feel free to pause at any point to discuss what is happening in the story or check for understanding.

After Reading:

Why do you think the boy has left his home? As a class, talk about some of the reasons people emigrate. Are any of the students from migrant families? Ask them to speak to their parents or grandparents about what led their families to emigrate and then share their findings with the class. What do their stories have in common? What features are different?

Why do you think the boy carries a teacup full of soil from his homeland? What could the teacup, the soil and the tree that grows from it be symbolic of?

What do you think is meant by the words ‘things can change with a whisper’?

Turn to the final page. There are no words here, but the story continues. What is suggested by the illustration? How is it possible to tell a story without words?

I think one message from the story is that change can happen fast with an unknown future. I think this fits with our lesson topic because in order to undergo a trip like the boy did you would have to be able to have healthy mental health habits. I can connect it to the book because it says that he had good and bad days but was able to weather the storms.

What habits do you think he had to endure this journey?

Were you able to make any connections to the boy and his journey?

Assign the poster task.



SURVIVING THE CITY

Before Reading:

What does the front cover of this book tell you about the story?

What do you predict will happen in this story?

The main characters in this book are Indigenous Canadian teens? What is your understanding of the word Indigenous?

During Reading:

Feel free to pause at any point to discuss what is happening in the story or check for understanding.

After Reading:

What is the author's message in this text?

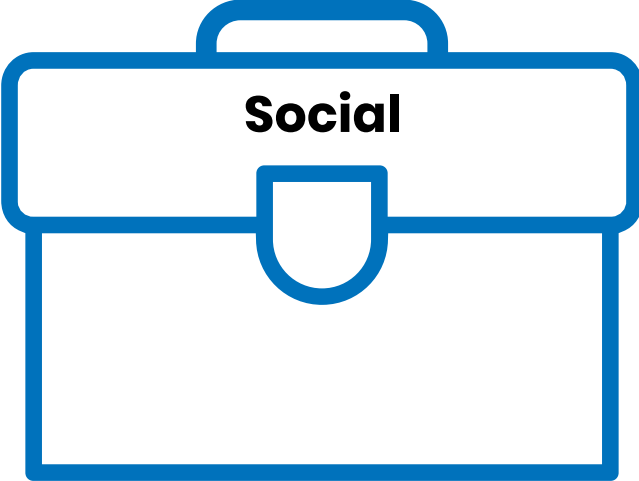
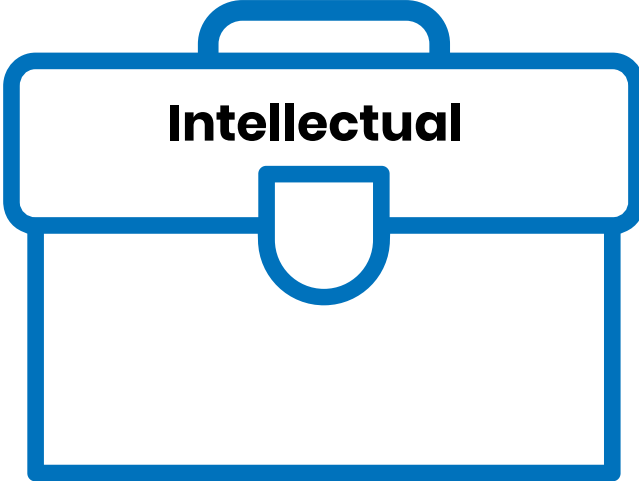
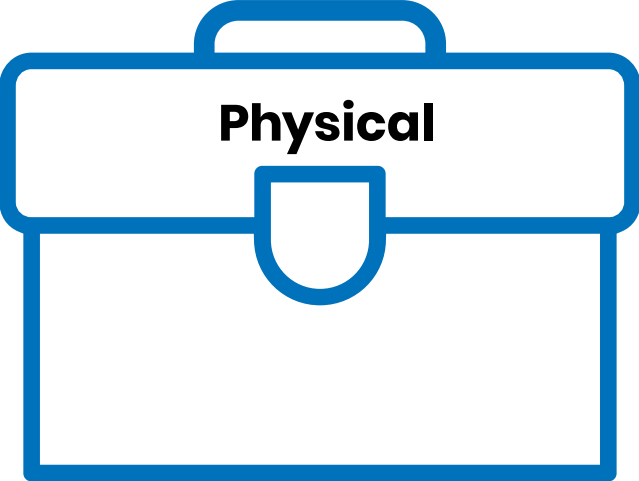
What connections did you make to the story? Or did you make any additional connections to the story?

Why do you think I read this story to you if our topic is focused on healthy living?

Assign the poster task.



Healthy Habits Toolboxes



I Will poster



My Toolbox Exemplar

