



Grade 8: Lesson 2

Societal Views & Impact of Stigma

Optional Mentor texts: Malala’s Magic Pencil – Malala Yousafzai
Perfectly Norman – Tom Percival
Our Future: How Kids are Taking Action – Janet Wilson

Time: Lesson – 1 period
Extension – 1 period

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.

D3. demonstrate the ability to make connections that relate to health and well-being – how their choices and behaviours affect both themselves and others, and how factors in the world around them affect their own and others’ health and well-being.

SPECIFIC EXPECTATIONS:

A1.4 apply skills that help them build relationships, develop empathy, and communicate with others as they participate in learning experiences in health and physical education, in order to support healthy relationships, a sense of belonging, and respect for diversity.

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 3.4 explain how word choices and societal views about mental health and mental illness can affect people and perpetuate stigma. Identify actions that can counteract that stigma.



LEARNING GOALS:

We are learning...

- that our words and actions affect others and it's important for us to recognize when we can make a positive difference.
- the ways that stigma towards mental health and mental illness affect others.
- to determine different ways they can reduce stigma about mental health and mental illness.

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 brainstorm ways we can change our word choices and societal views about mental health and mental illness.
- I can identify examples of stigma when talking about mental health and mental illness.
- I can determine actions we can take to reduce stigma.

MATERIALS & RESOURCES NEEDED:

Lesson

- ❑ Whiteboard/Chart paper – somewhere to record answers
- ❑ We Can Make a Difference handout (provided)

Extension

- ❑ Breaking the Stigma PSA (provided)
- ❑ PSA organizer (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.
- Self-reflection is encouraged before starting this lesson. Reflect about the classroom environment, student relationships and sense of belonging. Observe students' responses during the Minds-On activity and provide opportunities for individual follow-up if needed.
- The task in this lesson focuses on ways that students can make a difference with regards to mental health stigma. This task can also be applied to some of the other issues that are described in the mentor texts. Students may wish to take action on climate change, anti-Black racism, colonialism, poverty reduction.



Cross Curricular Expectations

NOTE: Reading expectations are met when adding an optional mentor text. 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>A1.1 apply skills that help them build relationships, develop empathy, and communicate with others as they participate in learning experiences in health and physical education, in order to support healthy relationships, a sense of belonging, and respect for diversity.</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>D3.4 Explain how word choices and societal views about mental health and mental illness can affect people and perpetuate stigma and identify actions that can counteract that stigma.</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 – 10 minutes

That's Me activity (from School Mental Health Ontario)

1. In a circle, one person starts with a statement about themselves – something that they like to eat, their favourite hobby, TV show, book, etc.
2. If the statement is true for someone else, they stand up and say: "That's me!"
3. The person to the right of the first statement speaker goes next, sharing a statement about themselves and an action that goes with it. If the statement is true for someone else, they stand up and say: "That's me!"
4. Continue around the circle until everyone has the opportunity to participate and share a statement.

Ideas: I like to eat pizza, My favourite colour is blue, I'm an only child, I would eat a worm for \$1 million, I'm the youngest of my family, I like spicy food, I have a pet, I want to have a superpower, I can speak a different language

Debrief after the exercise: Did you learn something new about your classmates? How did it feel to be standing at the same time as others? What about standing alone or only with a few students? Sometimes we like to be a part of a group but there is always value to being unique. [SEL 1.4] Remind students that no two people are the same and that we can celebrate our differences and unique experiences.

Sometimes we think we need to be like others in order to avoid feeling "different" or feel like we will be judged or. Celebrating our uniqueness and being true to ourselves can help us to feel confident and mentally well.

Action Task – 20 minutes

Suggested Teacher Prompt: (*Ontario Curriculum, Health and Physical Education, 2019, p290*)
"Mental health is often misunderstood, and when people hear someone mention 'mental health', they may automatically think 'mental illness'. Negative feelings or judgements about mental illness can be the result of not understanding or of being afraid. We all have 'mental health'. How might societal views on mental health and mental illness perpetuate stigma and even cause harm?" [SEL 1.6]

Possible Student examples:

"They can stop people from getting the help they need."

"If people who have a mental illness do not feel safe to talk about it or to get help, they can end up feeling hopeless, lonely, and hurt."



Suggested Teacher Prompt: (*Ontario Curriculum, Health and Physical Education, 2019, p290*)

“There are lots of things that we can do individually or as part of a group to address stigma and help get rid of it.

The way we treat people and talk about mental health and mental illness is one way. There are also groups and organizations in the community that we can be a part of that help create awareness about mental health.

Can you think of some ways that you could take action to reduce stigma associated with mental health?” [SEL 1.6]

Possible student examples:

“Lots of schools, like ours, have wellness clubs that create awareness and plan events to bring attention to the importance of mental health. They also provide an opportunity for us to learn about different strategies and to support one another.”

“I know that there are also youth groups in the community and even across the province that focus on mental health and on giving youth a way to use their voice to help bring about change. I think being involved in groups like this not only helps others, but can make us feel good too, because we’re being a part of something bigger and we’re doing something that is making a difference.”

“I think the best thing we can do is show kindness and compassion. Listening to others, respecting what is different and unique about everyone, and showing empathy for other people’s feelings and experiences encourages others to respond in the same way.”

Activity:

Put students in pairs or small groups and have them complete “We Can Make a Difference” handout. Explain to students they are to answer the questions in point form as best as they can. [SEL 1.4, 1.6]

Consolidate – 10 Minutes

Bring the group back together and discuss their answers.

Make a master list with their answers and keep it posted, it will help if you choose to do the Extension task.

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:

“Breaking the Stigma” PSA

Create a message on the importance of breaking mental health stigmas.

Students can:

- Create a poster
- Create a commercial either live or recorded
- Infographic
- Slideshow presentation
- Create a TikTok

Overview of the books suggested:

MALALA’S MAGIC PENCIL

As a child in Pakistan, Malala made a wish for a magic pencil. She would use it to make everyone happy, to erase the smell of garbage from her city, to sleep an extra hour in the morning. But as she grew older, Malala saw that there were more important things to wish for. She saw a world that needed fixing. And even if she never found a magic pencil, Malala realized that she could still work hard every day to make her wishes come true. This beautifully illustrated volume tells Malala’s story for a younger audience and shows them the worldview that allowed Malala to hold on to hope even in the most difficult of times.

PERFECTLY NORMAN

Meet Norman.

Norman is normal—*perfectly* normal.

That’s until he grows a pair of wings!

Norman loves his new wings, but he’s worried about everyone will think. After all, they’re definitely NOT normal. Norman decides to cover them with a big coat, but hiding such a big part of his life makes him feel miserable. Can Norman find the courage to be himself? 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.

OUR FUTURE: HOW KIDS ARE TAKING ACTION

Young people from across the globe are raising awareness about what issues matter to them most and are working to protect the future that we all share.



Suggested Mentor Texts and Guides

MALALA'S MAGIC PENCIL

Before Reading:

Have you heard of Malala Yousafzai? What do you know about her?
What do you think this book might be about?

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 I would read this book if our focus is on having a healthy mental health and breaking stigmas? (Malala gives hope, stands up for others, inspires others to stand up for what they believe in)...
Hoping others will stand up for others and break the stigma of mental health and mental illness.

Do you think Malala has a positive mental health?

Malala is an international icon that fights for others, she gives hope. She represents the idea that it only takes one person to make a difference. How did she show that in this story?

Can you make any connections to the story?

Assign the PSA task.

PERFECTLY NORMAN

Before Reading:

Today I will be reading a book about being proud and true to yourself, not being afraid to show who you are, being confident. How would this message help break the stigma of mental health and mental illness?

During Reading:

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

After Reading:

Is there such thing as perfectly normal?

Norman tried to hide who he was? Have you ever felt that way?

What do you think the wings represent? (Wings symbolize freedom: it's better to accept your true identity than to live any type of lie)



Why do you think I would read this book if our focus is on having a healthy mental health and breaking stigmas?

Some messages:

- Trying to hide your differences is often more stressful than actually showing them. Norman eventually realizes that it was the coat that was making him miserable, and not his wings.
- A child may try to hide things about themselves which they feel aren't normal in order to 'fit in'.
- There is no such thing as 'perfectly normal' – everyone is different in their own way – and no one is perfect.
- By revealing his differences, other children feel more confident about showing theirs.
- It takes courage and confidence for Norman to reveal his wings, and for his friends to reveal theirs.

Could you make any connections to the story?

Assign the PSA task.

OUR FUTURE: HOW KIDS ARE TAKING ACTION

Before Reading:

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

What do you predict will happen in this story?

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 PSA task.



We CAN make a DIFFERENCE

<p>Define mental health. Define mental illness.</p>	<p>How do we change our word choices and societal views about mental health and mental illness?</p>
<p>What are some ways you hear people speaking about mental health and mental illness that demonstrates stigma?</p>	<p>What actions can we take to reduce the stigma associated with mental illness? How do we “break the stigma”?</p>



Public Service Announcement

Your task:

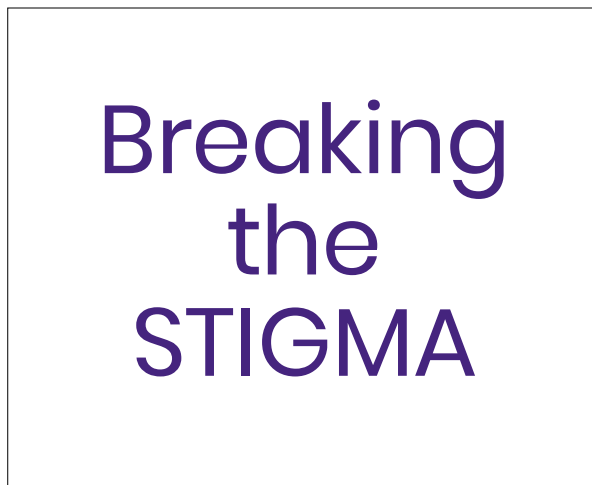
Create a message on the importance of breaking the mental health stigma.

You can:

- Create a poster
- Create a commercial either LIVE or RECORDED
- Create an infographic
- My idea _____

This project must include:

- Facts about mental health
- Facts about how to break the stigma
- Discuss how you are an advocate for positive mental health



Use the information that we have discussed in class and feel free to do more research independently. Your information should be clear and age appropriate for grade 4-8.

**Have fun and be creative,
I can't wait to see what you come up with!**



My PSA

<p>I will: (highlight your choice)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> Create a poster<input type="checkbox"/> Create a commercial either LIVE or RECORDED<input type="checkbox"/> Create an infographic<input type="checkbox"/> My idea _____
<p>My information:</p>	<p>Facts about mental health</p>
	<p>Facts about how to break the stigma</p>
	<p>Discuss how you are an advocate for positive mental health</p>
<p>Brainstorm for good copy: (What you plan on including: images, extra information, layout)</p>	

