



MH LIT: Student Mental Health in Action

Administrator Implementation Tip Sheet

This tip sheet provides ideas for the implementation of **MH LIT: Student Mental Health in Action**, a four-part lesson series for secondary school students.

Consider Alignment and Fit

Before introducing **MH LIT: Student Mental Health in Action**, consider your school plan and how this lesson series can help respond to identified needs. Think about your school community and other mental health related strategies underway. Consider the cultural and community context. Is this the right resource at the right time?

Have you...

- Looked at the [lesson plans and supportive materials](#)?
- Reflected on the needs of students in this area?
- Considered how you might connect the lessons to other school plans and priorities?
- Thought about how this resource adds to other mental health efforts in the past and underway, ensuring no competing messages?

If this resource is right for your school, the tips below can help you with implementation.

Show Your Commitment

As a school administrator, you set the tone. Find ways to signal that you think helping students to learn about their mental health is an important use of class time.

“There are so many different initiatives competing for teacher time, but this is of central importance. I think this is number one.”- Educator

Coordinate Delivery

MH LIT: Student Mental Health in Action is modular and can be delivered flexibly. It can be taught within many different courses and is appropriate for secondary students across the grades. It can (and should) be nuanced for the students receiving it (e.g., different examples may be used for grade 12 students than grade 9 students). It is important to coordinate implementation so that all students have access to this information, but that they only receive it once in any given school year (not from multiple teachers across courses). There can be value in repeating the lessons across school years, as repetition can aid learning and conversations will naturally differ as students develop and grow. Learning can also be reinforced in other classes.



- You can deliver the lessons in the way that best suits your school/classrooms (e.g., the lessons can be delivered in full or broken into parts and delivered over more than one period; suggestions for doing so are provided in the lessons).
- To minimize duplication, you might choose a mid-week morning period and invite staff to deliver the lessons at the same time.
- Consider strategic delivery times during the school year (e.g., Mental Health Awareness Week, prior to major transitions such as graduation, before extended school closures).
- Consult your board Mental Health Leader and/or school mental health staff about timing if there are recent events of concern in your school community.
- For more ideas about timing, see [educator preparation suggestions](#).

Introduce MH LIT: Student Mental Health in Action in Positive Ways

Educators suggested the following ways to share the lessons with them:

- Via board email (e.g., from the Principal or Mental Health Leader to show support for their use)
- Through presentations and walk throughs (e.g., a 5-10 minute presentation at a staff meeting) (please see an option in the [Implementation Materials for School Leaders section](#))
- Through teacher champions who can encourage interest, share materials, build confidence that the lessons are accessible, and support others using them
- By sharing/brainstorming connections with course material to identify places to introduce or reinforce the learning within **MH LIT: Student Mental Health in Action**, for example:
 - Health and Physical Education, Career Studies, Biology, Religious Education, General Learning Strategies, Psychology/Sociology/Anthropology – highlight links with curriculum content associated with mental health and wellness
 - Cooperative Education – in addition to curricular links, note how strategies in **MH LIT: Student Mental Health in Action** can support workplace wellness
 - Mathematics – suggest using survey and statistics presented in **MH LIT: Student Mental Health in Action** for topics related to data management
 - English – draw on factual information provided in **MH LIT: Student Mental Health in Action** to support novel studies with mental health themes

Bring People Along

Mental health literacy may be new for some staff. Help educators to build comfort and confidence with the material. This may include offering mental health literacy learning for educators in advance of implementing **MH LIT: Student Mental Health in Action**. This and other considerations are highlighted below.



How might I...	Suggestions You Might Consider
Support teacher uptake?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure staff know they have permission and encouragement to use the lessons. • Use school climate data to help inform which students to bring the lessons to first (i.e., which grade or subject, etc.) so staff see links to ongoing priorities. • Reinforce that the lessons offer an opportunity to cultivate a positive environment and focus on wellness strategies that support students to learn, regardless of the subject. • Provide staff time to become familiar with the materials and prepare. • Encourage early adopters to share their experience with staff who may be more reluctant. • Start with a supportive pace. Consider readiness for staff and consider one module at a time, if needed. There may be additional opportunities to deliver the lessons throughout the year.
Build teacher confidence to deliver the lessons?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Share the preparatory materials provided with the lessons; additional learning resources are also provided (e.g., MH LIT for educators). • Offer opportunities for educators to explore the lessons. • Review the lessons together as a school or community. • Remind staff of any additional school supports available (e.g., student support staff and/or school mental health staff) and invite them to partner in delivering the lessons. • Invite board level staff to support delivery of the lessons, if available (e.g., introduce the lessons at a staff meeting and offer classroom visits to model their delivery).
Help teachers to create supportive spaces for these conversations with students?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have a conversation at a staff meeting about stigma, mental health, thoughtful language, and setting the stage to include and value all voices and perspectives. • Take time as a staff to reflect on personal bias and privilege, the cultures and identities of students served, and possible gaps in teacher-student perceptions about mental health and mental illness (school/board mental health and equity staff may be able to help). See: Mental Health and Equity for Educators.
Support teachers concerned about how to address student needs?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use the optional parent/caregiver letter located on page six of the Template Communication Materials within the Implementation Materials for School Leaders Section and additional parent/caregiver handouts to tell families about the lessons. • Plan ahead to provide alternative activities for any students for whom parents/caregivers express concern about participation (e.g., a student with a mental health concern who is currently in crisis). • Consider students who may be vulnerable and discuss options for participation with staff (and the student where possible) so there is a consistent and agreed upon approach prior to delivery.



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure educators know the available school and community supports and keep phone numbers/resource lists accessible and up-to-date. • Introduce school mental health support staff, if appropriate. • Post information about where to seek help on classroom/school sites. • Remind staff that informal supports can also be valuable (e.g., faith leaders, Chaplains, Elders, family members).
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Embrace Student Leadership

Nothing about them without them! Students have much to say, and much to contribute, when it comes to mental health. They want to learn about mental health at school, and they want to be sure that they are learning in ways that are relevant and responsive and from educators and mental health professionals who can answer questions that might arise. Engaging with senior students to assist with reviewing and sharing **MH LIT: Student Mental Health in Action** can be a helpful way to bring the learning to life.

What are your opportunities to get students involved?

- Talk to your Student Council about how students might take the lead.
- Ask a student mental health group or committee to help promote the lessons through announcements, videos, or classroom visits.
- Investigate whether students in leadership classes with appropriate support and planning could bring the lessons to younger students in your school.

While you are considering how to engage students, consider how to engage parents/caregivers and your School Council, too!

“I know I am not the only student feeling overwhelmed with the ‘resource overload’ that occurs outside of class. These are critical conversations and I appreciate your efforts to facilitate them within classrooms and combat a greater, deeply-rooted issue that is the stigmatization of mental health.”

- Student

As administrators, you play a critical role in these lessons reaching students. Thank you!

