

# Healthy Minds, Healthy Youth:

## A **SPEAK UP**

### Lesson Activity



2014

Dear teachers:

Welcome to Healthy Minds, Healthy Youth: A Speak Up Lesson Activity

This is a resource for increasing students' mental health literacy by enabling young people to gain knowledge about mental health problems and actions they can take to connect to support early and quickly. The lesson activity is designed to have students teach each other by researching the mindcheck.ca website and then presenting the information to the rest of the class.

This resource was developed by Linda Wowk, RPN, Nurse Educator and Nicole Chovil, PhD, Child, Youth and Young Adult Mental Health and Substance Use Services, Fraser Health Authority as part of the Speak Up program. Funding for the development of this learning resource was generously provided by Coast Capital Savings.

Mental health issues such as stress, depression, anxiety, and psychosis are the primary health problems experienced by young people in their teens and early 20s. It is estimated that one in five young people will develop a mental disorder that requires professional intervention. Many other young people struggle with mild to moderate mental health problems. Mental health problems impair a young person's ability to function at home, at school or work and with their peers.

Early awareness and intervention are key to preventing the escalation of emerging mental health problems. mindcheck.ca is a British Columbia-based teen and young adult website (ages 13-25) that helps young people to sort out what's going on for them and connects them with tools and resources.

The Healthy Minds, Healthy Youth learning resource provides an easy to use lesson activity that incorporates the use of the website mindcheck.ca as a learning resource to help meet some of the health related prescribed learning outcomes for Health and Career Education for Planning 10 classes. This lesson activity does not require teachers to have prior knowledge about mental health. We do encourage teachers to review the mindcheck.ca website prior to implementing the lesson activity, but it is the students who will research information and "teach" each other.

This resource is based on an educational model developed by Fraser Health that utilizes a professional and young person with lived experience who present information on mental health problems and engage with students to help them better understand early signs and resources they can use to effectively manage problems. We recognized a need to provide teachers with a resource they could utilize in their school where live presentations are not feasible. The lesson activity is based on the idea that students learn best from each other and fostering dialogue on mental health is one of the best antidotes to eliminating stigma.

We welcome feedback from teachers. If you have any comments or suggestions, please complete the feedback form or send us an email at [speakup@mindcheck.ca](mailto:speakup@mindcheck.ca).

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## HEALTHY MINDS, HEALTHY YOUTH: A SPEAK UP LESSON ACTIVITY

### Introduction to Lesson Activity

The overall goal of this lesson activity is to improve the mental health status and quality of life of the youth and young adult population by promoting understanding of mental health challenges, importance of early detection and help seeking, and resources and support available for young people.

### Learning Objectives

The students will be able to:

- Recognize signs and symptoms of possible emerging mental health and substance use problems that are common among adolescents and young adults
- Gain a better understanding of mental health and substance use problems and how they can impact a young person's life
- Learn about the impact of stress and effective coping strategies to deal with stress
- Learn about self-care resources that can aid in dealing with mild or moderate problems
- Know how to access community health support services available when there is a need for professional help

The mindcheck.ca website is utilized as a teaching tool platform for learning about mental health issues.

This lesson activity employs participatory learning methods so that students have a meaningful and active role in the learning process.

The Healthy Minds, Healthy Youth lesson activity provides students with opportunity to:

- ✓ Develop team skills
- ✓ Take responsibility for tasks
- ✓ Learn about early intervention in mental health and finding help
- ✓ Develop research skills
- ✓ Strengthen presentation skills
- ✓ Discuss mental health issues with peers
- ✓ Learn from their peers

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### Prescribed Learning Outcomes

Analyze factors that influence health

- Propose strategies for enhancing and maintaining emotional health and well-being.
- Develop speaking and listening skills to interact with others for the purpose of contributing to group success, discussing and comparing ideas and opinions that peers have on individuals' attitudes and behavior on mental health issues
- Identify factors and influences on substance use and associated risks and harms.
- Describe health alternatives to substance misuse (stress management)

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### Overview of Lesson Activity

#### 1. Introducing topic of mental health

Student Handout: Why Mental Health?

#### 2. Student Learning Activity

[mindcheck.ca](http://mindcheck.ca) – a resource for learning about mental health

Class is divided into groups who are assigned one of the mental health conditions on [mindcheck.ca](http://mindcheck.ca)

Each group researches the condition and presents what they learned to the rest of the class.



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### Introduction to mental health: Why Mental Health?

Purpose: Information on handout introduces students to what mental health is and why it's important. An overview of the mindcheck.ca website is also provided.

### Student Learning Activity

As a class, they will be using the mindcheck.ca website as a resource to learn about common mental health problems,

The class will be divided into groups (e.g., 4 to 5 students per group, depending on class size). Each group is responsible for researching one of the mental health problems covered on the mindcheck.ca website.

Assign one of the mental health problems covered on mindcheck.ca to each group and give assignment sheet to each student.

Each group will research

- Signs and symptoms of the mental health problem
- Screening quiz and feedback results
- Self care tools and community resources

The assignment sheet provides questions they can use in their research (See Appendix for Assignment Sheet).

#### Awareness of What Students May be Dealing With

**It is critical to be aware that in a class of 30 students, 4 or 5 of them are likely dealing with a mental health issue. Discussing mental health can trigger distress in a young person, so it's important to ensure that should one of your students confide in you, they have access to support.**

#### mindcheck.ca

**Mental health problems covered on mindcheck.ca include stress, anxiety, depressed mood, social anxiety and body image/eating problems.**

**Not all conditions need to be assigned. Students can always return to mindcheck.ca to learn about the other conditions.**

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Students can research the website individually or together during classroom time (if computers are available for the students to use) or each student individually researches their part as a homework activity and comes prepared to present with their team classmates.

Each group will present for 15 minutes on what they learned from the mindcheck.ca website (2-5 minutes per student).

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### Appendix

In this section you will find the student handout – Why Mental Health?, the student assignment handout, and a teacher feedback form.

# Why Mental Health?

ever wonder?  
why life seems so intense?

Have you ever felt...

stressed by having too much to do?

anxious before a big test?

sad after a big disappointment?

nervous when meeting someone new?

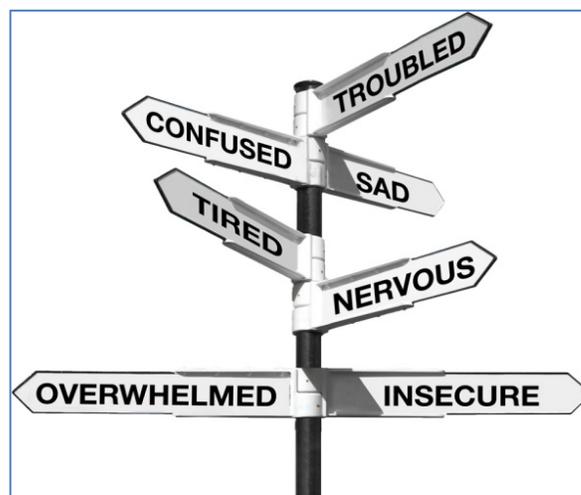
## What is mental health?

It's how you:

- think, feel, behave
- manage the ups and downs of life
- feel about yourself and your life
- see yourself and your future

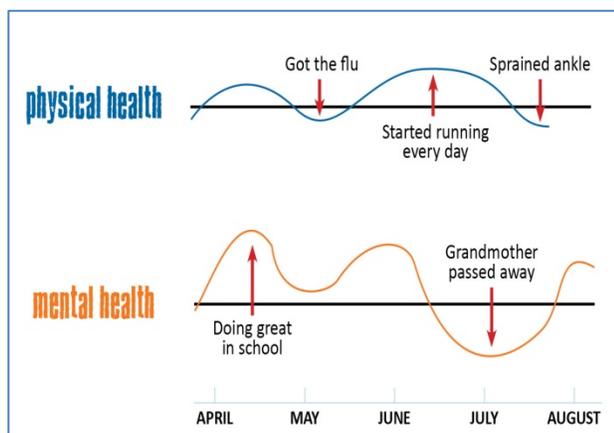
It's about how:

- stress affects you
- you deal with negative things that happen in your life



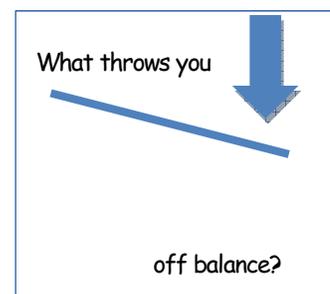
We all experience thoughts, emotions and behaviours - they're part of everyone's daily experience. It's important to know what we're feeling and how we're doing. It's also good to take action when we're not feeling like our usual self.

Our mental health fluctuates over time just like our physical health.



Life events can affect one's mental health. Everyone has times they feel more or less well. It's natural to feel off balance at times - sad, anxious, stressed out. Most of the time, we can manage these, but sometimes they may not go away or start to interfere in our life.

Knowing when what you're experiencing is more than a temporary bad day - recognizing what's going on early is key!



### Why learn about mental health now?

- 3 out of 4 people who developed a mental health condition had symptoms before 24 years of age.
- Recognizing signs early enables one to take action to prevent problems from getting worse



## Introducing the website mindcheck.ca



mindcheck.ca is provincial website for teenagers and young adults like yourself to help you better understand what's going on if you are dealing with difficult thoughts, feelings or actions.

mindcheck.ca provides information on common mental health challenges such as depressed mood, anxiety, stress, body image and eating problems, alcohol and drug use problems, and psychosis. Within each section are self assessment quizzes that can help you to know if anything is going on, links to online self care tools and information on how to connect to community resources. There is also a section on how to support friends.

Speak Up @ mindcheck.ca is a section in mindcheck.ca where young people can contribute their ideas, creative works, and experiences to the conversation on mental health.

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### Student Assignment Handout

Name : \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Mental Health Problem Assigned** (Place a checkmark beside the mental health problem your group will be covering)

Anxiety     Depression     Stress     Psychosis     Social Anxiety

Body Image & Eating     Alcohol Use Problems     Drug Use Problems

There are three main sections that need to be covered. Decide as a group who will be covering which section. Place a checkmark beside the section you will be responsible for researching and presenting.

**It's a good idea to review all of the information for the condition you are researching (not just your section) so you have a good idea of what the mental health condition and topics that are covered.**

Use the questions provided below as a guide in researching and developing your presentation.

### Section 1. Mental Health Problem

#### Questions:

1. Click on the character on the homepage that is dealing with the mental health problem you have been assigned to research. Watch the video. What is troubling the person in the story?
2. What are some of the things they are experiencing? Go to the "What to look for" page to find out about some of the other symptoms a person might experience.
3. What other information is provided about this mental health problem (Look at the additional pages in this section.)

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**Section 2. Quiz – Self screening Tool** (Go the quiz page and take the quiz a couple of times – answering in the low range and then in the high range.)

**Questions:**

1. What is the purpose of the quiz? (Hint: Read the instructions for the quiz)
2. Give some examples of the types of questions that are asked in the quiz.
3. Take the quiz twice answering differently for each. What are the different types of recommendations offered for your two different results?

**Section 3. Self Care, Community Resources**

**Questions:**

1. Research the Self-care Resources section and describe briefly the types of self care resources that are listed for the mental health problem.
2. Try out one of the self-care resources and describe how it works and what types of skills can be gained from using it.
3. Go to the “Mental Health Services” page in the “Get Support” section and find the name of an organization in your community that offers services for young people. (Hint: Click on HealthLinkBC to search).

**Suggestions for Presenting**

If you do a powerpoint presentation, consider adding images to make it more visually interesting.

Build in some questions you can ask the class so they can participate.

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### Teacher Feedback Form

We are always interested in receiving feedback from teachers on the Healthy Minds, Healthy Youth: A Speak Up Lesson Activity.

Name of School		School District	
Grade Level		Size of Class	

1. Were students assigned such that most of the mental health conditions in the lesson activity were covered (i.e., depression, stress, anxiety, body image and eating, social anxiety and psychosis)?

Yes       No – please comment:

2. Did students present back to the class?

Yes       No – please comment:

3. Did you make any changes to the way in which the activity was done?

No       Yes – please describe the changes you made:

4. How effective is this lesson activity in helping students better understand mental health issues?

Not at all     A little     Quite a bit     Very much

5. Will you use the lesson activity again?

Yes       No

6. What did you like most about the lesson activity?

7. Do you have suggestions about how the lesson activity could be improved?

**Please send completed feedback forms to: Nicole Chovil, Child, Youth & Young Adult Mental Health and Substance Use Services, Shirley Dean Pavilion, 9634 King George Hwy, Surrey, BC V3T 0G7**

**Fax: 604 585-5560      Email: [Nicole.Chovil@fraserhealth.ca](mailto:Nicole.Chovil@fraserhealth.ca)**