

Did you know? The average classroom has at least five students with serious mental health needs, one struggling with severe abuse and ten living in poverty (1).

Did you know? Strong **Tier 1: UNIVERSAL – Supports for All** and **Tier 2: TARGETED – Supports for Some** implementation is critical to the success of prevention and early intervention for the positive development of student’s social-emotional competencies and mental health (3). Children’s healthy social-emotional development is enhanced by classroom environments, school-wide expectations, and daily interactions with adults who promote the complex learning process towards achievement and wellness.

Mental Health – WELLNESS STRATEGIES

Mental health is a dimension of overall health and includes a continuum from high level wellness to severe illness. **School mental health** addresses all aspects of social-emotional development of school-age children and refers to supports for school-age children that are integrated throughout the school community (Continuum of Support): universal strategies to promote the social and emotional well-being and development of all students; targeted supports to students at risk of or with mild mental health challenges; and extended supports to students with significant needs.

In SD57, the **Mental Health – WELLNESS STRATEGIES**, encourages the integration of mental health supports into the daily academic and social life of schools.

Dependent on the classroom environment and the school community and culture, the mental health strategies listed could be **Tier 1: UNIVERSAL – Supports for All** OR **Tier 2: TARGETED – Supports for Some**

Did you know? Children spend more time in school than in any other formal institutional structure (4). As such, schools play a key part in children’s development, from peer relationships and social interactions to academic attainment and cognitive progress, emotional control and behavioural expectations, and physical and moral development. All these areas are reciprocally affected by mental health.

If unfamiliar with a strategy, please use your preferred search engine to discover the details

ALL STRATEGIES START WITH RELATIONSHIPS

Relationships

- Relationship building (2X10 strategy, Find Mind and Remind)
- Home contact – building a relationship with parents; call or make contact with a positive before you need to make contact with a negative
- Invitation every day from the principal and the teacher to the student to come to school; come for classroom instruction and then move to a quiet place with an invited friend to work
- Warm welcome with choices (high five, dance, fist pump, wink, smile, Hello, handshake . . .)
- Allow student to bring pictures of family to school for separation anxiety
- Create a plan for catching up when there has been a long absence for hospital stays or periods where they just can't cope with school

Student Options

- Stand while working
- Draw a picture or write in a journal
- Colour a picture
- Use headphones
- Individual quiet work space
- Listen to music
- Self-monitoring
- Sensory tools (i.e. Stress ball or fidget)
 - For the hands
 - For the feet
 - For the body
- Move to new location in the classroom
- Stop, Walk, Talk
- Optional and types of seating
 - Use seating disk
 - Hoki stool
- Use timer

Some strategies should be scheduled and planned into your day

Breaks

- Have student take frequent breaks or activity
- Break, moving position in class
- Snack break
- Take a break
- Call home breaks built into schedule
- Choices room with an adult supporter; opportunity for re-teaching when calm, connection, problem solving
- Choose a different location to work in (quieter) under supervision

All these strategies need to be:

- explicitly taught,
- modelled,
- practiced,
- retaught as needed,
- taught in the moment,
- monitored for success

Teacher/School Strategies

- Talk less
- Use a steady and even volume
- Speak in calm and neutral tone
- Proximity to students
- Reassurance
- Limited redirection
- Reduce assignment
- Speak with student in private
- Start Commands with students in mind (think trauma, think mental health)
- Use visuals to explain assignment
- Use visuals to explain directions
- Individual and visual schedules
- Individualized instruction
- Talk one on one with student
- Talk to parent
- Non-verbal cues and signals
- Extra time to complete assignments
- Give choices
- Ignore and roll with the resistance
- Model appropriate language
- Model problem solving
- Alternatives to suspension
- Positive behaviour plan
- Structured breaks
- Check in Check out (CICO)
- School based Counselor involvement
- Break down assignment
- Break down directions
- Clear and concise directions
- Small group instruction
- Social stories
- Structured routine creates safety and predictability
- Use timer
- Walk and talk
- IN Class calm down space, calm down bin
- Alternative modes of completing assignments
- Think Sheets
- Touch base with student
- Behaviour tracking (related to the suspected or diagnosed mental health concern)
- Give advanced notice for transitions, substitute teacher, any change to routine
- Preferred sitting
- Talk about anxiety to normalize and educate about it
- Tests written in a quiet, calm environment and give extra time
- Play calm music during work times
- Turtle strategy
- Class meetings
- Option for a stuffy or a squishy for comfort – teach this as a tool not a toy; appropriate use
- Community (classroom) building development
- Sensory walk – taught, modelled, practice with them, in the moment

Teach

- Teach conflict resolution skills
- Teach coping skills
- Teach organizational skills
- Teach relationship skills
- Teach relaxation techniques
- Teach social skills
- Teach substitute words
- Mental Health Literacy grade 6 – 12 (teenmentalhealth.org)
- Teaching students to identify and monitor their wellness in body and mind
- Teaching feelings and emotions of self and others
- Empathy teaching
- Teaching interoception
- Self-compassion teaching, modelling

SKILLS

Grounding/Relaxation

- Relaxation videos (include links)
- 60 beats a minute music - create a play list
- 54321 sensory search for grounding
- Hugging self- proprioception
- Balance on one leg
- Climbing, pushing something, jumping on a small trampoline
- Write and tear up their worries,
- Keep a worry journal to put the worries away for awhile
- Talk back to your worries strategy
- Class yoga

Breathing Activities

- Star breathing
- Hand breathing
- Box breathing
- Straw breathing
- Flower breathing
- Bubbles
- Deep belly breathing
- Count to 10

RESOURCES

Social-Emotional

- How Big are my Worries?
- Worry Dragon
- ALERT program
- Kelso’s Choice
- WITS Program
- Zones of Regulation
- Everyday Anxiety Strategies for Educators (EASE)
- Mighty Moe
- Social Detective
- Second Step
- <http://cultureforlife.ca/>

Mindfulness

- Mind Up
- Mind Yeti
- Whole Body Listening
- Class Dojo
- Go Noodle

School Human Resources

- Youth Care Worker
- Indigenous Education Worker
- School Counsellor
- Indigenous Social Worker
- Principal/Vice Principal

Practice Tip:

- ✓ What is the purpose of the strategy??
- ✓ Who is your student? What are they struggling with?
- ✓ What is supportive and what is detrimental?
- ✓ Collaborate with your school counselor or a clinician if you are not sure of your next steps

Did you know? Schools benefit from mental health systems to create positive learning environments where all students can flourish (2). Addressing barriers to learning, including mental health challenges, through learning supports is an essential function of schools.

See Over

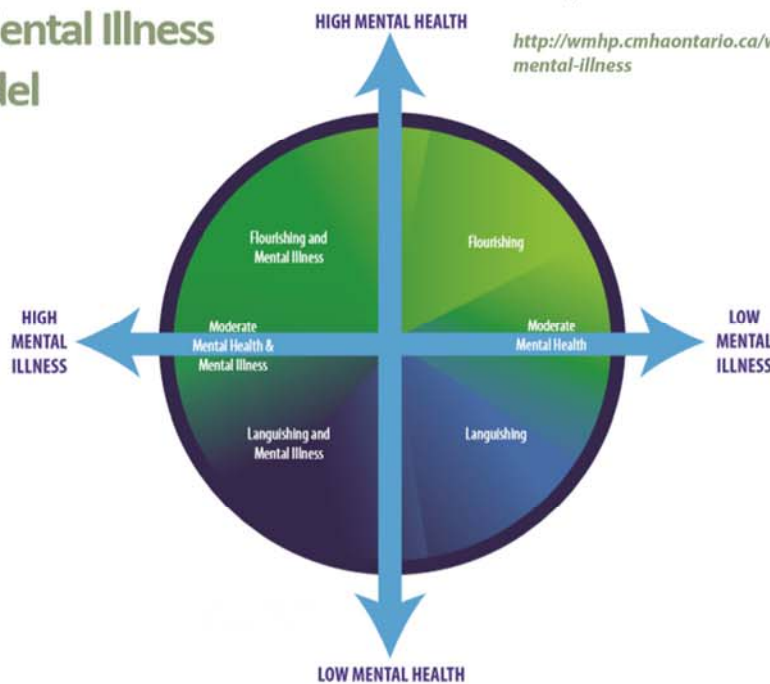
Consider

The Dual Continuum Model of Mental Health and Mental Illness can assist in understanding the distinction between mental health and mental illness. It is helpful to think of mental health and mental illness as two separate but interconnected concepts existing on a continuum. For example, it is possible to have a physical health condition such as diabetes, but lead a healthy balanced life, and still be considered to have optimal health. The same is true of mental illness. It is possible for an individual with a mental illness, who uses healthy strategies and maintains a balanced life to have positive mental health.

Mental Health and Mental Illness Dual Continuum Model

<http://wmhp.cmhaontario.ca/workplace-mental-health-core-concepts-issues/what-is-mentalhealth-and-mental-illness>

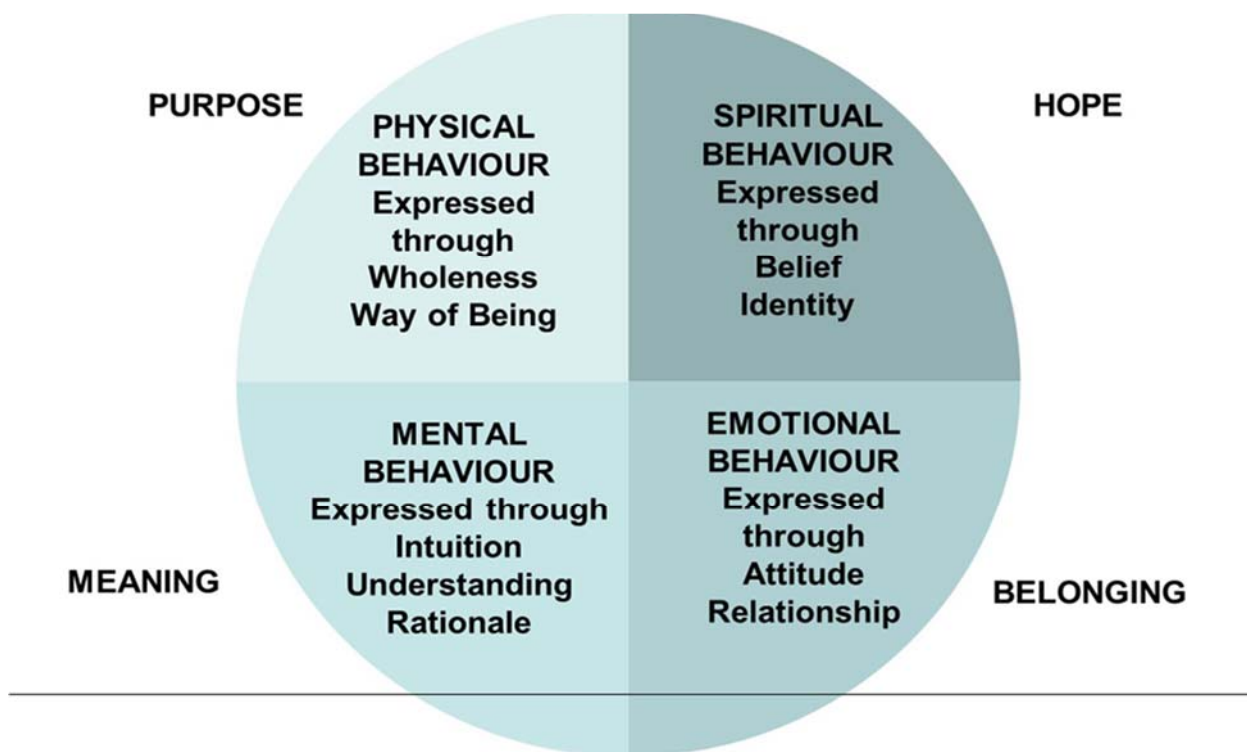
- You can experience a mental illness and mental well-being at the same time!
- Many mental health problems are long-standing or relapsing
- Early intervention and coping/support is key!



Consider

A cultural perspective on mental health for our Indigenous students. Be mindful of different world views.

Indigenous Wellness Framework



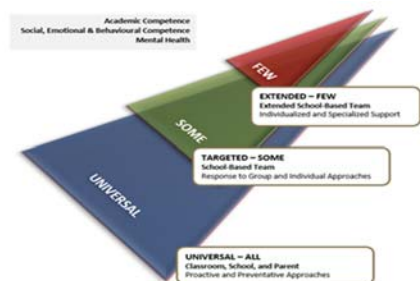
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Pathways to healing: A 58 page mental health guide from the Canadian Collaborative Mental Health Initiative for First Nations people. This toolkit “offers a basic overview of mental health and mental illness along with a contextual section outlining the impact of history, social, economic and political conditions on the mental health of these peoples.” http://www.shared-care.ca/files/EN_PathwaystoHealing.pdf

Footnotes:

1. (Beth Doll, Katherine Brehm and Steven Zucker, 2014. Resilient Classrooms: Creating Healthy Environments for Learning (2nd Ed.) New York: Guilford Press)
2. Slade, Eric. (2002). Effects of School-Based Mental Health Programs on Mental Health Service Use by Adolescents at School and in the Community. Mental health services research. 4. 151-66. 10.1023/A:1019711113312.
3. BC MOE new curriculum design
- Adapted from The Wisconsin School Mental Health Framework: Integrating School Mental Health with PBIS
4. Rutter M, Maughan B, Mortimore P, Ousens J. Fifteen thousand hours: secondary schools and their effects on children. Harvard University Press; Cambridge, MA: 1979



April 2020

This is a living document. Additions, deletions, and changes to strategies will occur. Do you have an additional strategy or resource? Please email your school clinician.



Inclusive Education School District No. 57