



healthy transitions

Promoting Resilience and Mental Health in Young Adolescents



Getting Started

Acknowledgements

Healthy Transitions: Promoting Resilience and Mental Health in Young Adolescents was an initiative of the Child and Youth Health Network for Eastern Ontario. Facilitated through the Children's Hospital of Eastern Ontario (CHEO), the Network brings together professionals and parents from across the region and from across the sectors that impact child health: social services; education; recreation and health.

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Disclaimer:

Ottawa Public Health has made every effort to make sure this material is up-to-date and accurate as of September 2019. However, all information in this presentation is subject to change without notice. Please contact the Ottawa Public Health's Mental Health Program at mentalhealthteam@Ottawa.ca each year for revisions and updates to the presentation.

Session 1: Thoughts, Feelings, Actions

Session 2: Coping with Feelings and Stress

Session 3: Getting Help When You Feel Overwhelmed

Session 4: Communication

Originally, this project was funded by the Provincial Centre of Excellence for Child and Youth Mental Health at CHEO in May 2006. Currently the Healthy Transitions program has been adapted and is now coordinated, implemented and updated by Ottawa Public Health.

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Getting Started

Objectives of Healthy Transitions

Healthy Transitions has been designed to promote mental health in young adolescents by:

- Helping youth develop knowledge, skills and attitudes important for mental health and resilience (youth sessions);
- Strengthening links between schools and community

Confidentiality

Confidentiality is an essential ingredient of Healthy Transitions. Specific statements (attributable to individuals) made during the course of youth sessions, should not be shared.

It is essential to review the limits of confidentiality with students. Students must be reminded that although information shared during group sessions will be kept confidential, facilitators must contact the proper professionals if students reveal that:

- They are hurting themselves
- They intend to hurt themselves
- Someone is hurting them
- They intend to hurt someone else

It may be helpful to identify students who may need extra support and/or monitoring to the school guidance counselor, principal, social worker or psychologist. It is also important to **develop a safety plan, with school staff, including the principal, for students who may disclose concerning information as part of this program.** Ensure teachers have a contact to go to if they need guidance with regards to a student who discloses information to them.

Ground Rules:

It is important to establish ground rules with each group, so that everyone in the group feels comfortable participating. Suggest a few ground rules, and then ask for additional ones from the group. If you like, you can record all the ground rules on a flip chart and post during the sessions.

Suggested Ground Rules:

- All class members treat everyone with respect (not put downs, hurtful jokes, etc.)
- Information shared in the class is kept private
- Students make an effort to participate in the activities, and are open to working in groups with all students
- Students listen when someone else is talking
- Students bring their sense of humour and try to have fun

Remind students that if they feel the need to share very personal feelings or experiences, they may come to speak to the facilitator privately.

Key Messages



- We have some control over our mental health and well being.
- We need to take care of our mental health the way we take care of our physical health.
- There are ways of thinking, as well as actions we can take, that can promote mental health (help us feel better and cope with everyday struggles).
- The way we think about things influences our feelings and actions.
- We can change the way we feel and act, if we first change the way we think.
- It's OK to feel sad, upset and angry in certain situations. Sometimes trying to change the way we think about things can help, but sometimes situations and feelings are just too overwhelming for us to handle alone. At times like these, we need to get help (just as we would if we were feeling physically sick or had been physically injured).

Planning

The sessions are ideally provided about once a week but can be delivered over a longer period of time. Each session includes a detailed outline and directions for facilitating the session, as well as 'masters' for all handouts to be used in the session.

Folders for Youth

We recommend that youth have a folder or notebook just for *Healthy Transitions*. Alternatively, a booklet of all the handouts can be distributed at the beginning of each class and collected at the end of each class. Students can then keep the folders after the 4th session has been completed.