

# HEALTHY TRANSITIONS

Promoting Resilience and Mental Health  
in Young Adolescents

Getting  
Started





## Getting Started!

### Background

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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### Disclaimer

Ottawa Public Health has made every effort to make sure this material is up-to-date and accurate as of December 2023. However, all information in this presentation is subject to change without notice. Please visit [School Health Online](#) each year for revisions and updates to the presentations.

### Continued Collaboration

Our commitment to improving health outcomes is an ongoing journey. We encourage you to share feedback and suggestions for improvement on this module, using our feedback form found on our [School Health Online](#) webpage. Together, we can continuously refine our resources to better the evolving needs of our school communities.



## Objectives of Healthy Transitions

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

- Helping young adolescents develop knowledge, skills and attitudes important for mental health and resilience
- Strengthening links between schools and community

Healthy Transitions now offers two sessions for grade 4 students, one session for grade 5 students and two sessions for grade 6 students. The sessions are ideally provided about once a week but can be delivered however best meets the learning needs of the students. Each session includes a detailed outline and directions for facilitating the session, student worksheets and PowerPoint presentations to be used in the session.

### Grade 4

Session 1: Coping with Stress

Session 2: Emotions

### Grade 5

Session 1: Stigma

### Grade 6

Session 1: Thoughts, Feelings, Actions

Session 2: Communication

## Key Messages of Healthy Transitions

- There are different types of stress which affect everyone differently.
- We all have emotions and feelings. Some people might feel differently than you about the same situation, and that is normal.
- We need to take care of our mental health the way we take care of our physical health.
- Stigma can affect our ability to deal with emotional pain and to reach out for help.

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- We have some control over our mental health and wellbeing.
- The way we think about things influences our feelings and actions.
- There are ways of thinking about things, and actions we can take that can help us feel better and help us handle our feelings and stress.
- Sometimes trying to change the way we think about things can help, but sometimes situations and feelings can be 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).
- The way we communicate has an impact on our relationships, how others see and treat us, whether our problems get solved, and our feelings and the feelings of others.

## 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

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.** Educators should ensure they have a contact to go to if they need guidance with regards to a student who discloses information to them.



## Ground Rules

Please use as suggestions only.

It can be helpful to review classroom etiquette or establish ground rules together as a group, prior to this lesson, so that everyone in the group feels comfortable participating. If you like, you can record all the ground rules on a flip chart and post during the sessions.

### **Some examples:**

- Welcome all questions
- Listen attentively
- Create a safer space – an environment of respect and sensitivity
- Keep classroom discussions confidential

Instruct students to refrain from discussing personal situations or stories; however, students are encouraged to speak to the facilitator privately if they would like to discuss a topic further or share very personal feelings or experiences.

Let students know that support on sensitive topics is always available within the school community and through external partnerships. Supports are reviewed at the end of the presentation.