



Alberta Mental Health Literacy Project

Since its launch in September of 2013 the Mental Health Literacy project has strived to increase understanding and reduce the stigma of Mental Health with students and educators by providing classroom resources and training for school staff. Initially funded through the Alberta Children's Hospital Foundation, the initiative launched across six school boards in Calgary and surrounding areas. Recently the project has been expanded to include all school boards in Alberta and has secured ongoing funding through AHS. To date, the project has trained over 3000 school staff/professionals in the identification and referral of common mental health disorders in students. Over 300 hundred classroom teachers have been trained in the delivery of Curriculum Guide materials, and since May 2014 over 1000 grade 9 & 10 students have received the materials on mental health as a part of their lessons. The program has also recently been expanded to provide parent education in Mental Health.

Simple

- Uses the existing infrastructure of the schools as a natural venue to provide students with the materials
- Students receive evidence-based information about maintaining positive mental health and common mental disorders
- The Curriculum Guide contains universal materials that all students will benefit from
- Modules are available online with lesson plans, digital slide decks, and supporting multimedia materials for teachers to deliver
- Modules are flexible and adaptive so that they fit any existing educational setting based on the school's needs

Effective

- Preliminary research results in Alberta have shown significant gain in knowledge and attitudes with the school staff and students
- Qualitative reports indicate improvement in staff literacy regarding mental health and increased awareness
- Teacher knowledge has improved the quality and number of referrals to health services
- Providing students with information allows them to self-identify and peer-identify
- Natural links have been made between health and education clarifying pathways to care and increasing collaboration

Inexpensive

- The project roll out consists of 1.6 full time staff equivalents
- Trainings are free of charge and conducted on educational professional development days with trainers' time being supplied by health and education
- The Curriculum Guide materials are free and available online

Sustainable

- The program has currently trained over 200 'Core Trainers' and has spread to 30 school boards across Alberta
- The project has organically spread beyond school board staff to other professionals in schools such as police, occupational therapists, and nurses developing a larger community of shared literacy
- Materials are updated frequently to ensure that the most up to date evidence based information is provided to students and staff

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Go-To Educator Training - Alberta Mental Health Literacy Project

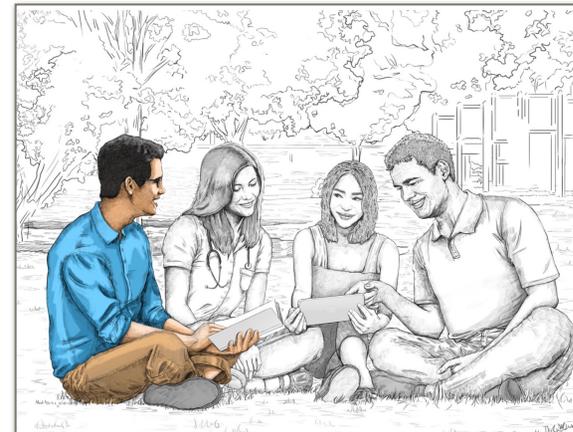
A "Go-To Educator" is any adult in a school that students turn to in a time of need. This 1 day training educates teachers or staff to better identify of students with mental health disorders and how to respond. The session addresses the importance of maintaining mental wellness and features a stigma reduction component. Trainings can be hosted at your school which allow a school staff to be trained at the same time. There are currently over 3000 school based professionals in Alberta that have attended the Go-To Educator Session.

Topics include

- The Brain: understanding Mental Health & Mental Illness
- The Causes of Mental Disorders
- Stigma
- Introduction to Common Mental Disorders such as Anxiety, ADHD, Depression etc.
- Identification, Triage and Ongoing Support in a School Based Setting
- Discussion About Teaching Strategies
- Talking to Parents

Training Format

- 1 day (typically a pd day) with a large group (school staff)
- School Hosted or AHS Hosted
- There is **no cost** for this training
- The training targets Junior High and Senior High School Staff but Elementary Schools receive a modified version
- This training serves as a pre-requisite for the **Curriculum Guide Training** which delivers mental health information to students or the **Parent Mental Health Literacy Session** which provides a general overview of key concepts regarding child and adolescent mental health



Research & Evaluation

The Go-To Educator session is comprised of evidence based materials. All participants are given the option of participating in the research and evaluation project involving a pre test and post test at the training

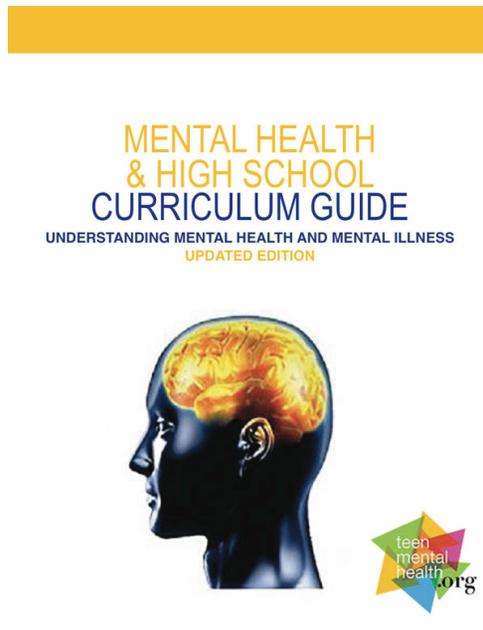
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Curriculum Guide Training- Mental Health Literacy Project

A key focus of the Mental Health Literacy project is to provide students information on Mental Health during a critical age of development. The Curriculum Guide materials target students in Grade 8 and above. Training to utilize the materials takes 1 day or half a day if the "Go-To" Educator training has been completed.

Curriculum Guide

Evidence based flexible materials for approximately 6 class periods for students in grade 8 and above. The modules are aligned with Health and CALM learning objectives.



Modules for Students address:

- The Stigma of Mental Illness
- Understanding Mental Health & Mental Illness
- Experiences of Mental Illness
- Information on Specific Mental Illnesses
- Seeking Help & Finding Support
- The Importance of Positive Mental Health

The materials in each module include lesson plans, supporting slide decks, interactive student activities, hand outs, supporting video clips and supplementary resources and are fully available free of charge online.

Research & Evaluation

Since its inception the Mental Health Literacy Project has had an integrated evaluation/research component. This ensures that we are making a difference. All participants are asked to participate in the evaluation so that we can ensure the program maintains fidelity. All teachers and student participants complete a pre and post training survey that measures attitudes and knowledge about mental health. Your school will receive feedback on the trainings effectiveness.

All trainings can be hosted at your school and are offered through Alberta Health Services. There is **no cost** to your school as this project was initially funded by the Alberta Children's Hospital Foundation and is now funded through Alberta Health Services.

For More Information Contact Andrew Baxter, Project Coordinator - andrew.baxter@albertahealthservices.ca
Teacher Resources available at: Teenmentalhealth.org