Hello,

Our educators have been called upon to be a leader, role model, sounding board, voice of encouragement and mentor to the hundreds of students that cross their path each year. Lately though, they are facing more and more instances of students who aren't able to be active participants in their learning because of emotional or mental health concerns and this has lead to many of our educators feeling stressed, overwhelmed, fatigued, under supported, ill informed or powerless.

Teachers can play a very important and supportive ongoing role in the lives of students struggling with mental health problems – when provided with training, tools and techniques that make sense to educators and students. Our team of adolescent mental health professionals at **TEENMENTALHEALTH.ORG**, directed by Dr. Stan Kutcher, offers training programs and resources for educators to get solutions to their concerns around school mental health.

Please find attached our 2011-2012 School Mental Health program guide. We invite you to join our effort by distributing our guide to all contacts that you believe could benefit from these valuable services (child & adolescent psychiatrists, school boards, schools, educators, parent organizations, etc) and/or linking our website/guide to your organizations website.

If you require additional information please contact me at your leisure. Thank you in advance for your time and contribution ☺

Kind Regards,

Jeff O'Neill, BScOT
Sun Life Financial Chair in Adolescent Mental Health
National Program and Networks Coordinator
Dalhousie University/IWK Health Centre
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For more information, please contact:
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School Mental Health

Making a Difference in the Lives of Young People and Educators

www.teenmentalhealth.org

Dear Colleagues:

I am sending you this information because we have a common goal: to work together to help improve the lives of young people and their families. A key to our success in this mission is to help improve youth mental health and to effectively address mental health problems and mental disorders in young people. Good mental health is both a learning enabler and a necessity for social, interpersonal and economic success. Schools, parents, communities, and health providers can come together with young people to help make this happen.

The Sun Life Chair in Adolescent Mental Health Team at the IWK Health Center and Dalhousie University has been working together with young people, parents, educators and health providers to develop resources and programs that can be used in various school and other educational settings to effectively address youth mental health. We are now at the point that we wish to share our material with you.

All of our material is developed using best practice knowledge translation techniques. This includes: needs identification; collaborative concept development; systematic review and abstraction of best scientific information; youth and end-user participation in materials and program development; health and educator expert input and review; youth engagement; pilot testing and evaluation. Our work is also independently informed by inputs from parents, an educator's advisory committee and a youth advisory committee. We work in partnership with groups and organizations with similar goals and welcome feedback and constructive criticism so that we can continuously work to improve our products and services.

We hope that the information contained in this package will be useful to you as you work to address the issue of school mental health. Further information, other related materials and results of various evaluations can be found on our website: **www.teenmentalhealth.org**. We welcome all questions and inquiries. Please contact us through our Program and Networks Coordinator, Jeff O'Neill at **slfc@iwk.nshealth.ca** or 1-902-470-6593.

Kind Regards,

Stan Kutcher, MD, FRCPC, FCAHS

Go To Educator Training

Every school has teachers, counselors and other staff to whom students naturally "go to" when they have a problem. This one day training program is designed to provide those individuals and other appropriate staff within schools with the competencies needed to understand mental disorders in young people, to identify those who are at high risk of having a mental illness and to better communicate with health providers and parents. Practical and contextualized to the needs of school personnel, this program can complement the Mental Health and Curriculum Guide (and its accompanying Guide training program) or it can be used as stand alone training for schools who want to better address the mental health needs of students. Ideally this program is delivered to a small group of educators (10 – 15 participants) who are joined by health providers working in the community.

Evaluations of this training program have demonstrated significant increases in knowledge and very high participant satisfaction.

Understanding Adolescent Depression and Suicide Training

This one day training program is designed for teachers, student services providers and administrators. Its purpose is to enhance knowledge and understanding about youth depression and suicide, to help school staff be better prepared to identify and assess young people at high risk and to provide suggestions as to how schools could most appropriately respond to such an event if it occurs. Ideally it is delivered to a maximum of 20 participants at a time.

Evaluations of this training program have demonstrated significant increases in knowledge and very high participant satisfaction.

"We are extremely appreciative that Dr. Stan Kutcher, an internationally acclaimed expert on adolescent mental health and his outstanding team, have provided us with timely and professional consultative expertise and powerful school mental health training programs. The content and delivery of these training programs are truly world class."

-Lance Bullock, Coordinator of Programs and Student Services, Halifax Regional School Board

Academy in School Mental Health

In collaboration with the Nova Scotia Department of Education, Nova Scotia Department of Health, Dalhousie University Medical Research Foundation, Dalhousie University Department of Psychiatry, IWK Health Centre, and the generous support of Dr. Fred Fountain our Chair team coordinated the first annual national Academy in School Mental Health for 180 educators, administrators, student service representatives, and school health personnel throughout the country in Halifax, Nova Scotia.

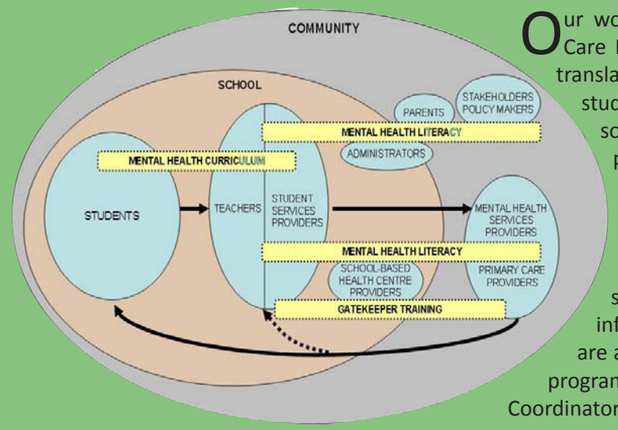
Our two day workshop focused on providing school staff with a variety of tools and techniques that they could use in the classroom. Workshops included effective strategies to communicate with parents, understanding mental health and mental disorders, evaluating evidence-based scientific research, psychotherapy and medication use and abuse, as well as specific sessions focused on mood disorders, anxiety disorders, disruptive behavior disorders, eating disorders and psychosis.

Attendees received a certificate of completion, as well as a host of electronic resources including live meeting notes complete with strategies for success. Please join us on July 9-11, 2012 in Halifax, Nova Scotia for our second annual Academy in School Mental Health.

"The Academy of School Mental Health was excellent. Thank you for providing this opportunity. I look forward to attending future Academies."

-Janice Graham-Migel, PhD, Halifax Regional School Board

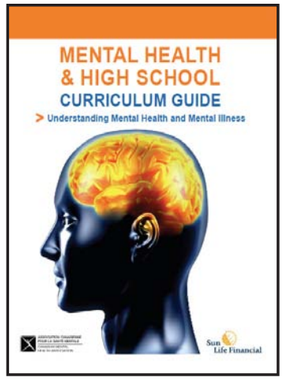
How We Think About School Mental Health: Our Pathways to Care Model



Our work in school mental health is informed by the Pathways to Care Model that we have developed. Our focus is on knowledge translation that creates materials and training programs useful for students, teachers, student services providers (eg: counselors; social workers; school psychologists; resource experts) and health providers. Starting with mental health literacy as the foundation for mental health promotion, this model addresses: prevention; early identification; effective intervention and collaborative continuing care. This package provides you with information about various products and training programs designed to support the school based components of this Pathway. More information about this model, these resources and many others are available through **www.teenmentalhealth.org** and the training programs can be accessed by contacting our Programs and Networks Coordinator at **slfc@iwk.nshealth.ca.**

Mental Health and High School Curriculum Guide

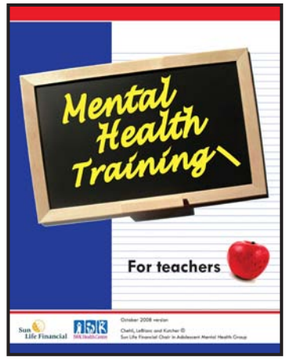
In collaboration with the Canadian Mental Health Association, we have developed the Mental Health and High School Curriculum Guide, to our knowledge the first Canadian resource of this kind. Recently launched it is already being used in schools across the country. The guide is designed to help teachers effectively address mental health literacy for their students and themselves. The guide includes a self-study and self-evaluation for teachers as well as: six classroom learning modules (such as: understanding mental health and mental illness; stigma; specific mental disorders of adolescence; help seeking and support; etc.); power point presentations for classroom use and video that features young people talking about their lived experience with mental disorders.



The Curriculum Guide has undergone extensive field testing in various schools across Canada and has been evaluated in a number of different school settings. Results from the evaluations show significant mental health knowledge acquisition and high satisfaction as a result of its implementation. The guide can be obtained at: **www.teenmentalhealth.org**

Training Program for Teachers in the Mental Health and High School Curriculum Guide

This one day training program designed for teachers complements the Mental Health and High School Curriculum Guide. It has been successfully piloted in various schools in Nova Scotia and Ontario and it reviews aspects of school mental health, provides a brief overview of information about the onset and presence of mental disorders in young people and an in-depth review of the Curriculum Guide and its supplementary on-line resources. This program is designed for small (10 – 20 participants) groups and encourages discussion and sharing of educational strategies. Teachers who take this training will develop a better appreciation of many aspects of mental health in young people, will enhance their proficiency in implementing the curriculum in their classroom and will be able to act as resource people to other teachers who plan to use the curriculum.



Evaluations of this training program demonstrate significant increases in knowledge and very high satisfaction from participants.

Mental Health Literacy For Educators

This one day training program provides teachers, administrators and other educators with a contextualized overview of mental health and mental disorders in young people. It addresses: the myths of adolescence, adolescent brain development, mental health, youth suicide and the common mental disorders that usually begin during this life phase. The information is contextualized for the school environment and the program can be formatted to fit large groups (lecture format) or smaller groups (workshop format).

Evaluations of this training program demonstrate significant knowledge acquisition and very high satisfaction from participants.

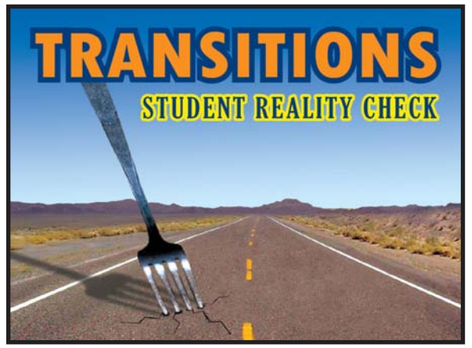
"Mental health is a fundamental component of student health and well-being. It is our goal in Nova Scotia to identify children and youth who show signs of significant mental health problems or mental disorders in the school setting and ensure they have access to appropriate health responders and mental health services."

"I am pleased that the team led by Dr. Stan Kutcher at Dalhousie and the IWK Health Centre has developed such innovative and useful mental health resources and training programs to help schools better meet the needs of students, reduce stigma toward mental illness, and improve access to mental health care for young Nova Scotians."

-Honourable Ramona Jennex, MLA, Minister of Education

Transitions: Student Reality Check

Developed with the assistance of student services experts at a number of universities and community colleges, the booklet Transitions: Student Reality Check is the first Canadian publication of its kind and was created to assist young people in addressing many of the issues they face as they transition from high school to secondary education. It is available in both long and short ("passport") forms and is meant to be distributed through secondary schools and post secondary educational institutions alike. It can be obtained at: **www.teenmentalhealth.org.** Evaluation of the impact of Transitions in first year postsecondary students in Nova Scotia showed that 90 percent liked the materials, 40 percent discussed them with a friend and 20 percent sought help for mental health problems as a result of Transitions.



This one-day training program designed for student services providers such as: counselors, health center professionals, student residence supervisors, interested faculty and others complements Transitions. This program is customized to fit the needs of the postsecondary institution and requires discussions between members of the Chair team and institutional representatives to ensure that the materials presented are appropriate to the competencies of the audience. Evaluations of these programs have consistently demonstrated very high rates of satisfaction from participants.

"The information contained in these booklets is a necessary bit of knowledge for not only students, but those that have association with them including teachers, parents, friends, etc. It is a very well organized and packaged source of information."

-Mike MacIssac, Student Development Officer, Cape Breton University

Taking IT Global: A Thematic Classroom

Virtual classrooms are an online community embedded resource that teachers can use to enhance their educational offering to students. Through the Chair's partnership with Taking It Global, we have developed and made available to teachers and students worldwide a thematic classroom addressing youth mental health. Developed by the Chair team, this thematic classroom includes: various online and social networking tools (such as: bookmarks, discussion board, text and video chat room, online image galleries, blogs, podcasts, online file space, class maps, etc.), core content, interactive learning games, etc. This resource allows teachers to incorporate today's technology to help enhance student's learning in the area of youth mental health. It is an ideal complementary resource to the Mental Health and High School Curriculum Guide and can be accessed through **www.tigweb.org**.

TakingITGlobal
INSPIRE INFORM INVOLVE

"As a specialized mental health hospital, Ontario Shores is proud to support teenmentalhealth.org for their contribution in providing mental health literacy and awareness in our schools. As we come together in health-care, education and community, we can provide a safe environment for young people to reach out for help and create a society free of stigma and discrimination."

-Ontario Shores Centre for Mental Health Sciences