

## MENTAL HEALTH EDUCATION

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### *Abstract*

*Mental health can be seen as an unstable continuum, where an individual's mental health may have many different possible values. Mental wellness is generally viewed as a positive attribute, such that a person can reach enhanced levels of mental health, even if the person does not have any diagnosed mental health condition. This definition of mental health highlights emotional well-being, the capacity to live a full and creative life, and the flexibility to deal with life's inevitable challenges. Many therapeutic systems and self-help books offer methods and philosophies espousing strategies and techniques vaunted as effective for further improving the mental wellness of otherwise healthy people. Positive psychology is increasingly prominent in mental health. The objective of this paper is to analyze Mental Health Education. The paper has been divided into four parts. First, part discusses the Mental health: a state of well-being. Second part highlighted Characteristics of mental health. Third part highlighted Safe, inclusive and empowering environments and fourth part discusses Role of teacher for good Mental Health.*

***Kew words:*** *Mental Health; Education.*

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## Introduction

Emotions, feelings, personality traits, and many other mental processes exist along a continuum, like the continuum of temperatures between hot and cold). Mental health problems are not defined by an objective point on a continuum. Mental health problems are caused by a combination of environmental factors, affecting an individual's position on a continuum, and biological factors, affecting an individual's predispositions and their responses to the environment. Mental health problems are episodic; only significantly affecting people for limited periods of time, known as episodes. Definitions of mental health are changing. It used to be that a person was considered to have good mental health simply if they showed no signs or symptoms of a mental illness. But in recent years, there has been a shift towards a more holistic approach to mental health. Mental health includes how people feel about themselves and other people, how they approach problems and challenges, and how they cope with life. Good mental health helps people handle stress, make wise decisions, and get along with others, in childhood and throughout adulthood. Mental wellness or good Mental Health is feeling, thinking, and interacting in ways that help you enjoy life and deal effectively with difficult situations. It is a feeling of emotional and spiritual well-being that respects the importance of culture, equity, social justice, relationships and personal dignity (Centre for Health Promotion, University of Toronto, 1997).

## Mental health: a state of well-being

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in the US, suicide is the third highest cause of death for those between the ages of 15 and 24, and the second-highest for 25- to 34-year-olds. In Great Britain, the charity MentalHealth.org.uk reports that one in 10 children between the ages of one and 15 have a mental health disorder. And while the UK's teen suicide rate is low in comparison, it does raise the question – are we doing enough to support the mental health of the younger generation? Mental health for young people in this country is poorly provided for. Some schools deal with students' issues through counselling services. Others have pastoral sessions to reflect on problems. Mental health describes a level of psychological well-being, or an absence of a mental disorder. From the perspective of 'positive psychology' or 'holism', mental health may include an individual's ability to enjoy life, and create a balance between life activities and efforts to achieve psychological resilience. Mental health can also be defined as an expression of

emotions, and as signifying a successful adaptation to a range of demands. Mental health is defined as a state of well-being in which every individual realizes his or her own potential, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to her or his community. Mental health refers to a broad array of activities directly or indirectly related to the mental well-being. The positive dimension of mental health is stressed in WHO's definition of health as contained in its constitution: "Health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity." The condition of being sound mentally and emotionally that is characterized by the absence of mental disorder (as neurosis or psychosis) and by adequate adjustment especially as reflected in feeling comfortable about oneself, positive feelings about others, and ability to meet the demands of life. Mental health is not just the absence of mental illness. It is defined as a state of well-being in which every individual realises his or her own potential, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to his or her community. (WHO, 2007)

Mental Health is about :

- How we feel about ourselves
- How we feel about others
- How we are able to meet the demands of life

Mental ill health refers to the kind of general mental health problems we can all experience in certain stressful circumstances; for example, work pressures can cause us to experience:

- poor concentration
- mood swings and
- sleep disturbance

Such problems are usually of temporary nature, are relative to the demands a particular situation makes on us and generally respond to support and reassurance.

Mental illness can be defined as the experiencing of severe and distressing psychological symptoms to the extent that normal functioning is seriously impaired.

Examples of such symptoms include:

- anxiety
- depressed mood

- obsessional thinking
- delusions and hallucinations

Mental wellness gives you a sense of

- self-worth
- dignity
- belonging
- problem-solving
- self-determination
- tolerance
- acceptance and respect for others

so that you can

- realize your full potential
- understand and feel good about yourself
- relate to others and expand your social support networks
- experience pleasure and enjoyment
- handle stress
- assess challenges and problems
- set goals and follow interests
- explore choices and make decisions
- have power and control over your life
- develop good problem-solving and coping skills
- bounce back from negative experiences that everyone encounters

### Characteristics of mental health

1. They are not overwhelmed by their own emotions - fears, anger, love, jealousy, guilt or worries.
2. They have a tolerant, easy-going attitude towards themselves as well as others and they can laugh at themselves.
3. They have self-respect.
4. They can take pleasure in simple, everyday things.
5. They have personal relationships that are satisfying and lasting.
6. They do not take advantage of others nor allow others to take advantage of them.

7. They feel a sense of responsibility to fellow human beings.
8. They do something about their problems as they arise.
9. They shape their environment whenever possible; they adjust to it whenever necessary.
10. They are able to make their own decisions.
11. They put their best effort into what they do, and get satisfaction from doing it.
12. They feel good about themselves.
13. They do not become overwhelmed by emotions, such as fear, anger, love, jealousy, guilt, or anxiety.
14. They have lasting and satisfying personal relationships.
15. They feel comfortable with other people.
16. They can laugh at themselves and with others.
17. They have respect for themselves and for others even if there are differences.
18. They are able to accept life's disappointments.
19. They can meet life's demands and handle their problems when they arise.
20. They make their own decisions.
21. They shape their environment whenever possible and adjust to it when necessary.

#### Key characteristics of mental health:

1. **Ability to enjoy life** : Can you live in the moment and appreciate the "now"? Are you able to learn from the past and plan for the future without dwelling on things you can't change or predict?
2. **Resilience** : Are you able to bounce back from hard times? Can you manage the stress of a serious life event without losing your optimism and a sense of perspective?
3. **Balance** : Are you able to juggle the many aspects of your life? Can you recognize when you might be devoting too much time to one aspect, at the expense of others? Are you able to make changes to restore balance when necessary?
4. **Self-actualization** : Do you recognize and develop your strengths so that you can reach your full potential?
5. **Flexibility** : Do you feel, and express, a range of emotions? When problems arise, can you change your expectations – of life, others, yourself – to solve the problem and feel better?

## Mental Health and Happy Life

*The National Canadian Mental Health Association has ten tips for good mental health:*

- 1. Build Confidence :** Identify your abilities and weaknesses together, accept them, build on your abilities, and do the best with what you have.
- 2. Eat right, Keep fit :** A balanced diet, exercise and rest can help you to reduce stress and enjoy life.
- 3. Make Time for Family and Friends :** Important relationships need to be nurtured. If taken for granted, these people may not be there to share life's joys and sorrows.
- 4. Give and Accept Support :** Positive friends and healthy family relationships show their strength during difficult times.
- 5. Create a Meaningful Budget :** Financial problems cause stress. Over-spending on our "wants" instead of our "needs" is often the culprit.
- 6. Volunteer :** Being involved in community gives a special sense of purpose and satisfaction.
- 7. Manage Stress :** We all have stress in our lives but learning how to deal with it when it threatens to overwhelm us helps to maintain our mental health.
- 8. Find Strength in Numbers :** Sharing a problem with others who have had similar experiences may help you find a solution and will make you feel less isolated.
- 9. Identify and Deal with Moods :** We all need to find safe and constructive ways to express our feelings of anger, sadness, joy and fear.
- 10. Learn to Be at Peace with Yourself :** Get to know who you are, what makes you really happy, and learn to balance what you can and cannot change about yourself. Mental Health Promotion raises awareness and understanding of mental health issues and reduces the stigma of mental illness through education and training. Parents and teachers can play a significant role in promoting mental health in their children and students.

## Addressing Mental Health Problems

Building protective factors like those noted above into the learning environment gives most children the foundation they need to attain and maintain good mental health. We also need to recognize and respond to children's more acute mental health needs. Schools can support children's mental health on three levels:

- **Environmental:** Creating a supportive school climate that fosters mentally healthy traits (e.g., connectedness, self-esteem, respect for others)
- **Programmatic:** Implementing programs or curricula targeted at specific issues and skills development (e.g., bullying prevention, conflict resolution, social skills)
- **Individual:** Providing interventions to students with chronic or acute mental health needs .

### Safe, inclusive and empowering environments

Environments that promote mental health are safe, inclusive and empowering

Mental health promoting environments are **safe** because they:

- support a range of opportunities for learning and physical activity
- foster safe, respectful and supportive relationships between children and young people, educators and families
- have strategies to promote positive and responsible behaviour, and to prevent and respond to bullying, discrimination and harassment, including through the use of digital technologies.

Mental health promoting environments are **inclusive** because they:

- value children and young people for who they are
- support and promote the physical and mental wellbeing of staff

Mental health promoting environments are **empowering** because they:

- create opportunities for children and young people's voices to be respected and to contribute to decisions that impact on their wellbeing, learning and environment.

### Role of teacher for good Mental Health

Children come to school each day with more than their lunch and backpack. They bring life factors that shape their learning and development. These influences range from family issues and health and culture to behavior, learning style, and abilities. Virtually all are related to mental health.

**1.Create a sense of belonging.** Feeling connected and welcomed is essential to children's positive adjustment, self-identification, and sense of trust in others and themselves. Building strong, positive relationships among students, school staff, and parents is important to promoting mental wellness.

**2. Promote resilience.** Adversity is a natural part of life and being resilient is important to overcoming challenges and good mental health. Connectedness, competency, helping others, and successfully facing difficult situations can foster resilience.

**3. Develop competencies.** Children need to know that they can overcome challenges and accomplish goals through their actions. Achieving academic success and developing individual talents and interests helps children feel competent and more able to deal with stress positively. Social competency is also important

**4. Ensure a positive, safe school environment.** Feeling safe is critical to students' learning and mental health. Promote positive behaviors such as respect, responsibility, and kindness. Prevent negative behaviors such as bullying and harassment. Teach children to work together to stand up to a bully, encourage them to reach out to lonely or excluded peers, celebrate acts of kindness, and reinforce the availability of adult support.

**5. Teach and reinforce positive behaviors and decision making.** Provide consistent expectations and support. Teaching children social skills, problem solving, and conflict resolution supports good mental health. "Catch" them being successful. Positive feedback validates and reinforces behaviors or accomplishments that are valued by others.

**6. Encourage helping others.** Children need to know that they can make a difference. Pro-social behaviors build self-esteem, foster connectedness, reinforce personal responsibility, and present opportunities for positive recognition.

**7. Encourage good physical health.** Good physical health supports good mental health. Healthy eating habits, regular exercise and adequate sleep protect kids against the stress of tough situations. Regular exercise also decreases negative emotions such as anxiety, anger, and depression.

**8. Educate staff, parents and students on symptoms of and help for mental health problems.** Information helps break down the stigma surrounding mental health and enables adults and students recognize when to seek help. School mental health professionals can provide useful information on symptoms of problems like depression or suicide risk.



**9. Ensure access to school-based mental health supports.** School psychologists, counselors, and social workers can provide a continuum of mental health services for students ranging from universal mental wellness promotion and behavior supports to staff and parent training, identification and assessment, early interventions, individual and group counseling, crisis intervention, and referral for community services.

**10. Provide a continuum of mental health services.** School mental health services are part of a continuum of mental health care for children and youth. Build relationships with community mental health resources. Be able to provide names and numbers to parents.

**11. Establish a crisis response team.** Being prepared to respond to a crisis is important to safeguarding students' physical and mental well-being. In addition to safety, the team provides mental health prevention, intervention, and postvention services.

- Teacher should motivate the student to do better things
- Teacher should give the remedial teaching to the slow learners
- Teacher should use different methods of teaching for student
- Teacher should give prizes to student for good things
- Teacher should arrange the guest lectures of experts for student

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