

LESSON PLANS
BOOK 2

MENTAL HEALTH LITERACY
**ELEMENTARY
SCHOOL RESOURCE**

Understanding Mental Health and Mental Illness



Land Acknowledgement

Mentalhealthliteracy.org is located on the traditional territories of the people of the Treaty 7 Region in Southern Alberta, which is home to the Kainai, Siksika, Piikani, Tsuut'ina and Stoney Nakoda First Nations. The City of Calgary is also home to the Metis Nation of Alberta, Region 3. We express sincere gratitude for these traditional lands where we live, work and play.

In support of reconciliation, we encourage schools and users of this resource to explore and become informed about the rich histories, stories and experiences of Indigenous peoples and communities in their area.

Elementary Mental Health Literacy Resource (EMHLR) Overview and Educator Guide

This document provides background information for the delivery of the EMHLR lessons found at:

<http://mhlcurriculum.org>

The password is: childh3alth

The Elementary Mental Health Literacy Resource has been written and created by:

Andrew Baxter, MSW RSW; Kyla Vieweger, MSW RSW CPT;
Deb Nunziata, M.Ed R.Psych; Dr. Yifeng Wei, MA PhD

Content review and editing:

Dr. Sterling Sparshu, MD FRCP; Katherine Jarrell, MSW RSW;
Rob Mcweeny, B.Ed, M.Sc Candidate, Katherine Clarke B.A., B.Ed.

Cover art and character illustration:

Rich Farr, B.Des

Graphic design and layout:

Therese Bianca Boyce, BCMM-ID; Crystal Bachura Cranston, BACMM-Epub

Special thanks to:

The Alberta Children's Hospital Foundation and Alberta Health Services

The EMHLR Steering Committee (educators and school mental health professionals who gave their time to provide valuable feedback throughout the EMHLR development process)

Dr. Wendy Carr, M.Ed PhD; Divinea Miller, BA; Darren Robinson (Web Dev);
Emmanuel Ho, B.Des; Dan Kim, B.Comm CFA; Hugo McLaughlin; Bryn Evans

This resource draws on foundational material by Dr. Stan Kutcher and the former *teenmentalhealth.org* team.

© This material is under copyright. It cannot be altered, modified or sold. It is meant for educational purposes only and is not a guide to diagnosis or treatment. If you are concerned about a mental health problem, please seek the advice of competent health professionals.



Table of Contents

6 Introduction and Background



14 Module 1: Understanding Mental Health

26 Module 2: The Stigma of Mental Illness



34 Module 3: Mental Health and the Brain

42 Module 4: Common Mental / Neurodevelopmental Disorders



48 Module 5: Helping Self and Helping Others

56 Module 6: Getting Mentally Healthy



64 EMHLR Celebrations of Learning

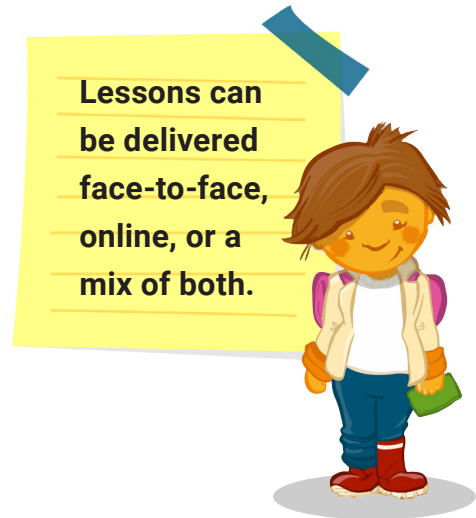
65 Appendices



Elementary Mental Health Literacy Resource (EMHLR)

The Elementary Mental Health Literacy Resource (EMHLR) is the first of its kind classroom-ready* resource designed for classroom teachers and related stakeholders to teach students in Grades 4 to 6 about mental health.

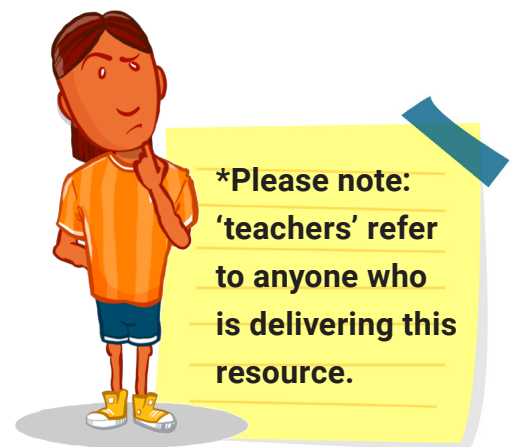
The conceptual framework of the EMHLR is drawn on an evidence-based mental health curriculum resource for the secondary school setting, *Mental Health & High School Curriculum Guide (the Guide)* (<http://mhlcurriculum.org/about-the-guide/download-the-guide/>). *The Guide* has been extensively implemented and researched in Canada and internationally. The development of the EMHLR is also informed by a Delphi study involving over 100 stakeholders (classroom teachers, school mental health professionals such as counsellors, psychologists, social workers, school administrators, special education experts, and curriculum design experts) from 13 provinces and territories in Canada as well as professionals from four other countries: Japan, the United Kingdom, Finland and the United States. The EMHLR is further informed by an environmental scan of related Canadian mental health websites and an extensive and systematic literature search of evidence-based mental health literacy programs to develop its content and structure. The EMHLR was developed in response to the many requests from school partners familiar with *the Guide*, who recognised the importance of introducing mental health literacy concepts to younger students.



What is the purpose of the EMHLR?

The EMHLR aims to help students:

- develop skills to obtain and maintain good mental health
- improve understanding about mental health and mental / neurodevelopmental disorders
- reduce stigma against mental / neurodevelopmental disorders, and
- promote help-seeking intentions and behaviours when necessary



The EMHLR is flexibly designed for Grades 4 to 6 classroom teachers* to deliver the core concepts and classroom activities within diverse classroom settings. Teachers can adapt the activities using the pedagogies they are familiar with to best meet student needs.

What are the major concepts for each module?

Module 1: Understanding mental health

- Everyone has mental health
- Mental health includes a wide range of states, including no distress, mental distress, mental health problems and mental disorders / illness
- Mental health is more than a positive mood (good mental health isn't just feeling happy)
- It is important to use appropriate words to describe our feelings and emotions

Module 2: The stigma of mental illness

- Stigma involves negative thoughts, feelings and behaviours towards mental illness (a conceptual understanding of stigma)
- People with mental illness can live a fulfilling life
- Stigma acts as a barrier to people seeking help
- We can all help to reduce stigma around mental illness (e.g. using appropriate words to describe thoughts and feelings and life events)

Module 3: Mental health and the brain

- The brain changes over time
- Our thoughts, feelings, behaviours and reactions to the environment are linked with the brain
- The brain and the body are connected
- Mental health is a component of physical health

Module 4: Common mental / neurodevelopmental disorders

- All mental disorders reflect difficulties in thoughts, emotions and feelings, daily activities, physical health, behaviours and signalling
- People with mental disorders can be treated and the sooner people receive proper treatment and support, the better the outcome

Module 5: Helping self and helping others

- Everyone has mental health that can be supported and promoted
- There are many ways of seeking help for mental health problems and mental disorders
- People with mental illness can live a healthy life with appropriate treatment

Module 6: Getting mentally healthy

- What is good for physical health is good for mental health
- Coping with stress appropriately will help to build resilience and new skills
- 'The Big 5' pillars of health (restorative sleep, strong social connection, vigorous physical activity, healthy eating and helping others)

What is the structure of the EMHLR?

The EMHLR provides teachers with classroom-ready lessons, activities and easily accessible resources grouped under 6 modules. The EMHLR modules are designed to be taught in sequence. Before delivering the resource, please review the [EMHLR Book 1: Core Concepts for Educators](#) and all of the modules to familiarise yourself with the content and delivery formats.

Each module contains the following:

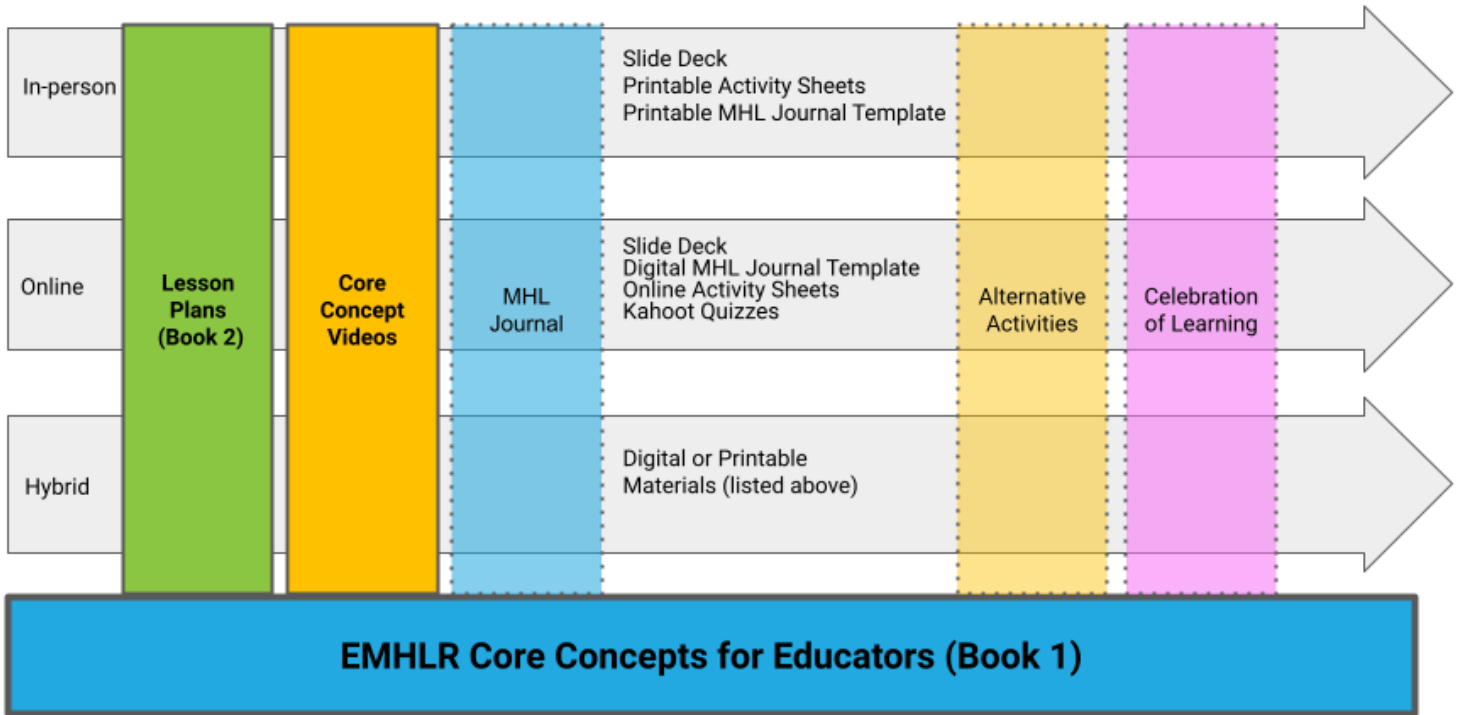
- **Conceptual Knowledge** - The key concepts to be conveyed to students
- **Procedural Knowledge** - The competencies students should achieve after completing the module
- **Handle With Care** - Areas of consideration for potentially sensitive topics
- **Core Concept Videos (required)** - The videos illustrate the core concepts and create the foundation for the activities and lessons. They are required viewing as all of the core concepts are covered in the videos.
- **Mental Health Literacy Journal (optional)** - The prompts are threaded through all 6 modules; printable and digital templates are provided
- **Module Activities (with digital adaptations)** - Step by step instructions to engage students and reinforce the core concepts. Digital Delivery suggestions are appropriate for online delivery and in-person delivery with the use of technology (see [Appendix A](#))
- **Alternative Module Activities** - Additional choices offered to adapt to students' needs and / or teaching style

Upon completion of the 6 modules, the EMHLR provides 'Celebration of Learning' activity choices to consolidate the core concepts.



Delivery

Required Elements
 Optional Elements



How long does it take to complete the EMHLR?

The EMHLR can be applied as a classroom resource within existing curriculum frameworks to enhance the mental health literacy of both students and teachers. Various resources have been developed to help educators apply the EMHLR as part of a curriculum component within an appropriate subject area. It is recommended to teach it as a block (six modules taught consecutively over a period of 8 to 12 classroom hours). Each module is designed to be completed within 50 minutes of classroom time except for Module 4 (addressing specific mental / neurodevelopmental disorders), which itself requires 3 to 5 classroom hours.

Are teachers required to take training to implement the EMHLR?

The book, *Core Concepts for Educators* (Book 1), serves as the foundational learning and training material to prepare educators to deliver the EMHLR in their classrooms. In addition to Book 1, we have many supplemental learning resources for those wishing to take a deeper dive into the concepts and increase their confidence. Please visit the mental health literacy curriculum website (mhlcurriculum.org) to access these additional materials. The MHL team is also standing by to respond to any questions and offer support.

What are the connections between the EMHLR and current school curriculum?

The EMHLR can be taught within an appropriate subject area that shares similar learning outcomes for the EMHLR. The educational jurisdiction in each province and territory in Canada may require Grades 4 to 6 students to complete different subjects. Please refer to your provincial / territorial Grades 4 to 6 subject learning outcomes for possible matches with the EMHLR core concepts.

You may match the learning outcomes of the required subjects designed for Grades 4 to 6 students in your region with those of the EMHLR and identify strategies to embed the EMHLR into your current school curriculum.

The First Peoples Principles of Learning offer a valuable lens to explore the learning in these modules:

<http://www.fnesc.ca/first-peoples-principles-of-learning/>

“ Learning ultimately supports the well-being of the self, the family, the community, the land, the spirits, and the ancestors.

~ First Nations Education Steering Committee in British Columbia



Pre-Module Steps

Establish Safety:

- Send an email / letter home re: upcoming mental health literacy instruction (see sample provided in [Appendix B](#)).
- Inform relevant staff about the MHL learning content being delivered that may be triggering for some students.
- Have a contingency plan available in case a student needs to leave during group instruction.
- Do frequent check-ins to see how students are doing with the content.
- Pay special attention to students with mental illness diagnoses to gauge how they are interacting with the content.
- Consider using an anonymous question box to see how students are experiencing this topic (e.g. encourage them to mention anything they're wondering about, want to share with you, want to delve into further, etc.).
- Establish ground rules for learning about and discussing mental health.** Include: respectful discussion, no sharing about someone else by name (e.g. prefer 'I have a friend who...' or 'I know someone who'...), no such thing as a dumb question, we laugh *with* each other not at each other, right to pass, etc. Emphasise that students can reach out to a teacher, counsellor or trusted adult if they have any questions or concerns about what they are learning.



Consider:

Delivery medium

The EMHLR materials have been designed to be delivered in face to face settings, remotely or in hybrid environments. Materials and activity sheets can be printed out or completed digitally by students on devices. (see [Appendix E](#) for download instructions)

Assessment

Many of the activities in this guide are open-ended. You may want to build criteria as a class for student projects and activities. This will allow students to consider what they would like projects to include while ensuring that both teacher and students are clear on assessment. Remember: Not all learning has to be assessed!

Journaling

Consider the use of a **MHL Journal** (digital or paper copy) for students to illustrate their learning as they proceed through the modules. The journal can be personalised by students and used as a space to reflect on learning, to document helpful strategies, or integrated with other curricular areas (e.g. Language Arts, Health, Art) to help meet cross-curricular learning outcomes. Look for MHL Journal Prompts with suggestions throughout the lessons.

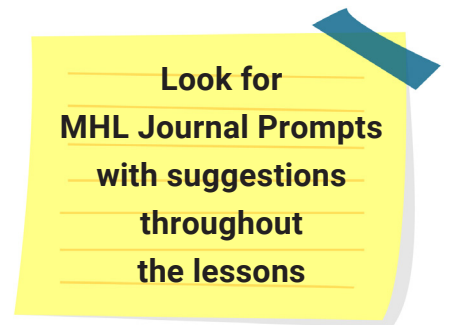
Beginning each lesson with a stress reduction technique

Introduce calming strategies such as box breathing, mindfulness, guided visualisation, progressive muscle relaxation, etc. This will help focus students for the lesson and introduce them to a variety of stress management approaches. (Remember that many of the free resources are just as effective as higher cost interventions).

A few examples:

- Stress Explained - Elementary Edition (a MHL resource):
<https://youtu.be/k8FiAxAqqYE>
- Supporting Emotional Wellbeing in Children: Belly Breathing:
<https://youtu.be/x7mtVmKcAxw>
- Just Breathe by Julie Bayer Salzman and Josh Salzman:
<https://youtu.be/RVA2N6tX2cg>

Aligning the EMHLR with other subjects and curricular resources (e.g. art project, novel, study etc.)



Module 1:

Understanding Mental Health

- Everyone has mental health
- Mental health includes a wide range of states, including no distress, mental distress, mental health problems and mental disorders / illness
- Mental health is more than a positive mood (good mental health isn't just feeling happy)
- It is important to use appropriate words to describe our feelings and emotions



Module 1:

Understanding Mental Health

Mental health refers to health related to our thinking / cognition, mood (e.g. emotions and feelings) and behaviours. There are two widely accepted definitions of mental health:

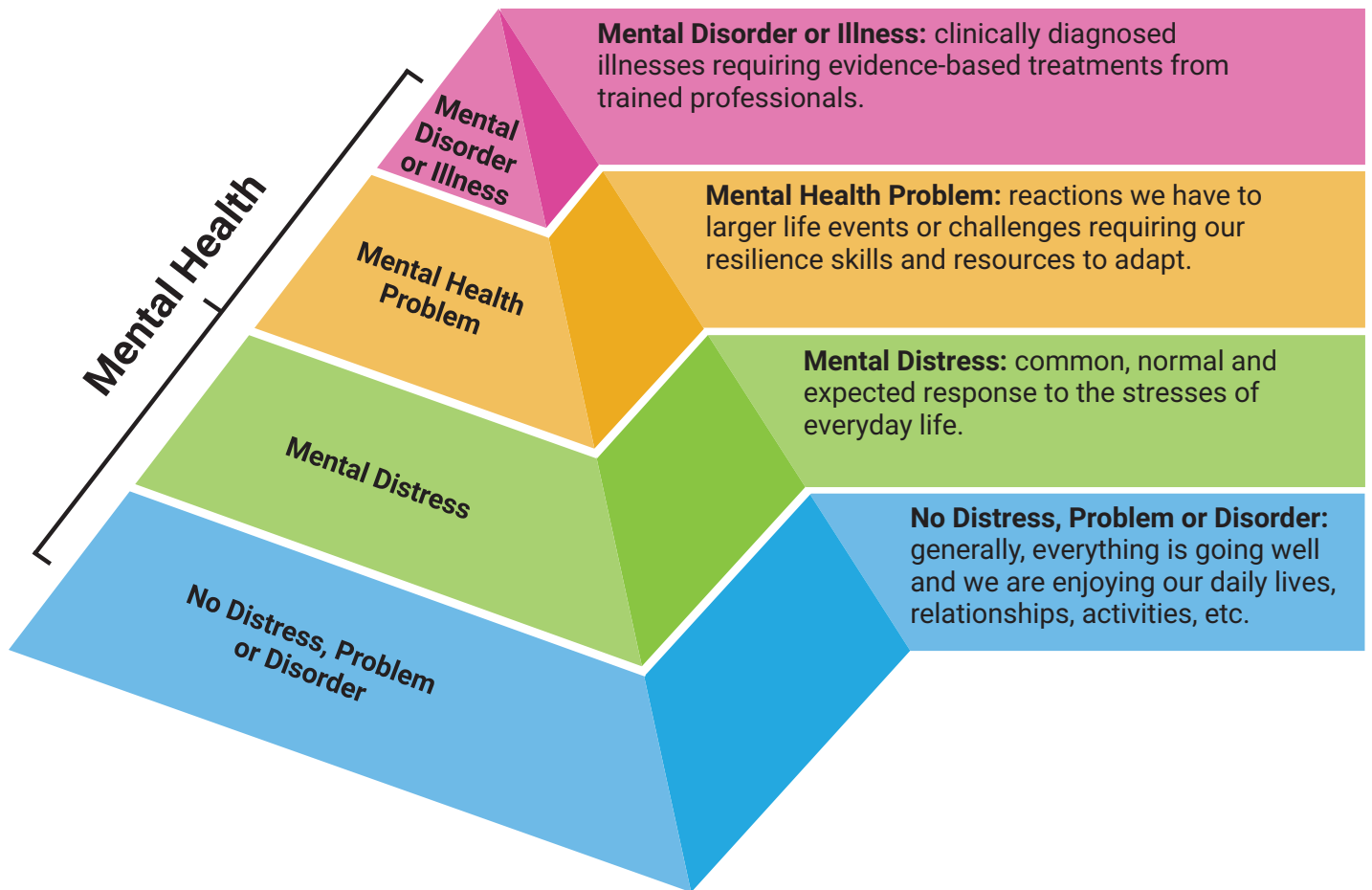
- “ The World Health Organisation (WHO) defines mental health as “a state of wellbeing in which every individual realises his or her own potential, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to her or his community.”
- “ The Surgeon General of the USA provides a definition of mental health: “Mental health is a state of successful performance of mental function, resulting in productive activities, fulfilling relationships with people and the ability to change and cope with adversity.”

The Surgeon General’s definition underlines the importance of developing competencies to challenge the demands of life, while the WHO definition focuses more on the state of wellbeing.

It is essential for teachers to help students understand that everyone has mental health which involves a number of states, including: no distress, mental distress, mental health problems and mental disorders / mental illness.



Watch *Mental Health Literacy Pyramid Explained*:
<https://youtu.be/VgYmIsYmUIU>



You can download a printable PDF on the pyramid of mental health states from: <https://mentalhealthliteracy.org/product/using-the-right-words/>



Remember:

- Mental health states are not a continuum. People DO NOT necessarily progress from mental distress to developing a mental illness.
- Any person can experience some or all of these mental health states within a short period of time (such as an hour), or over a longer period of time (weeks, months or even years). Sometimes a person may be in multiple states at the same time.

Links for Activities:



Classroom Slide Deck (see Module 1):

- [Google Slide Deck](#)
- [PDF Slide Deck](#)



Student Activity Sheets

- [Digital](#)
- [Colour \(printable\)](#)
- [Black & White \(printable\)](#)



MHL Journal

- [Digital](#)
- [Colour \(printable\)](#)
- [Black & White \(printable\)](#)

• See [Appendix E](#) for download instructions

• Please see individual activities for video links, sample quiz links and all other resources

Conceptual Knowledge	Procedural Knowledge	Handle with Care
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Everyone has mental health • Mental health is more than a positive mood. (all emotions are part of good mental health) • It is important to use appropriate words to describe our feelings and emotions, to regulate and cope • Mental health has a wide range of states, including no distress, mental distress (aka stress), mental health problems and mental disorders (illness) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To be able to describe what mental health is • To apply appropriate words to describe different emotions and feelings, and their intensity • To distinguish different states of mental health associated with different life events and situations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This topic explores the common misuse of diagnostic language. It is reasonable to expect that some students in your class have a diagnosed mental illness. The use of clinical terms will provide an accurate reflection of their lived experience with a mental illness



Activity 1 - How Do I Feel? Emotions Emojis

Purpose: Build on students' vocabulary to describe emotional feeling experiences

Conceptual Connection:

- All feelings are okay and everyone experiences a situation differently
- There are many words to describe feelings according to their intensity
- The language used to represent an emotional experience can affect how it is perceived and responded to by others
- Even the act of differentiating and naming a feeling helps with regulation



Ask students to think about how they are feeling today.

Show the class the *Today I feel...* slide.

Show the Feeling Word Family chart (see next page).

Explain that there are many many feeling words to express our emotions. Feeling words can be grouped into broad categories, or 'feeling word families'.

Resources:

- Digital Activity Sheets
- Printable Activity Sheets
- Classroom Slide Deck



Brainstorm two to three more words for each Feeling Word Family.

Resource: See the table on the next page and slide notes for examples



Provide students with blank *Today I Feel...* and *Feelings Thermometer* student activity sheets.

Resources:

- Digital Activity Sheets
- Printable Activity Sheets



Point out 'When we think about emotions we often think about their intensity like the temperature on a thermometer. In a single day, it is normal to experience a range of emotions from different emotion families and at different intensities. Learning to use many different words for our feelings helps us to more accurately understand both ourselves and others'.



Brainstorm with the students how the emotions listed on the chart might correspond with the thermometer.

Invite students to fill in their thermometer using one of the emotion word families.

Resource: Classroom Slide Deck



Review with the students how emojis can represent emotions and share a few visual examples (on the slide).

Resource: Classroom Slide Deck



Assign each student an emotion vocabulary word and have them create their own emoji on a paper plate. Make sure they write their emotion word on the bottom. Attach the paper plate to a popsicle stick. At the end of the lesson you can create a classroom display with the emojis.



Digital Delivery:

Assign each student an emotion vocabulary word and have them make a digital drawing of an emoji with a labelled emotion. Screen share it or include it in their notebook or MHL Journal.



Prompt: Think about your emotions today. What words can you use to describe some of your different feelings? Make a list or map of feeling words that you can use to describe your day.

Resources:

- Digital MHL Journal
- Printable MHL Journal

*The student-designed emoji can be added to their journal or shared with the class via a shared digital document.

Feeling Word Families

Sad	Happy	Mad	Afraid
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • unhappy • disappointed • miserable • upset • heartbroken • (others – blue, down, gloomy, hopeless) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • glad • joyful • content • terrific • pleased • (delighted, ecstatic, wonderful) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • angry • annoyed • frustrated • furious • grumpy • (enraged, grouchy, crabby) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • uncomfortable • unsure • worried • fearful • nervous • (terrified, alarmed, suspicious)

Activity II - What is Mental Health? Think, Pair, Share

Purpose: Draw students' attention to the understanding that we all have mental health. Review the key components that define mental health

Conceptual Connection: People think about mental health differently so it is important to know how to properly define it



Ask students to respond to the question, 'What is mental health?' (think)

Invite them to share with a partner giving each student one minute to share. (pair)

Ask one member from each pair to share an idea from their pair discussion with the class. Record the ideas; look for common themes together. (share)

Resources:

- Classroom Slide Deck
- MHL Journal or usual class notebook



Digital Delivery:

- Use a digital whiteboard or share the slide to present the question 'What is mental health?'
- Give students a few minutes to write down some ideas on their own.



Review these two definitions of mental health:

“ The World Health Organisation defines mental health as “a state of wellbeing 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 her or his community.”

“ The Surgeon General of the USA provides a definition of mental health: “Mental health is a state of successful performance of mental function, resulting in productive activities, fulfilling relationships with people and the ability to change and cope with adversity.”

Ask students 'Do these definitions say that good mental health means being happy all of the time... without any stress?' (Clarify: no!).



Prompt students to consider if a definition of mental health for children and youth would emphasise different components.

Ask 'What do you think should be emphasised for good mental health for children and youth? Would it be the same or different from good mental health for adults?'

(Some ideas might be - for good mental health, children and youth need: to feel safe, to feel heard, time to play and explore, adults to help them, to have the opportunity to learn, to practise problem-solving and be provided what they need to be healthy...)

Resource: Classroom Slide Deck



Digital Delivery:

- Use digital breakout rooms to pair-share, then bring students together to discuss and consolidate learning on a digital whiteboard.
- Together, look for common themes.



Summarise the key components of mental health for the students. Let students know they will be learning more about how they can boost their mental health in upcoming modules.

Resource: Classroom Slide Deck



Digital Delivery:

Create a classroom definition of mental health on the digital whiteboard.



Prompt: Write a definition of mental health in your journal. Does anything about the definition of mental health surprise you?

Resources:

- Digital MHL Journal
- Printable MHL Journal

Activity III - States of Mental Health

Purpose: Introduce students to the concept that there are different states of mental health

Conceptual Connection:

- Mental health describes a range of mental states
- Having a mental problem is not the same as having a mental illness even though similar emotions can be experienced in both states



Watch the video titled *States of Mental Health*.

Resource: <https://youtu.be/QEDhLexvueE>



As the students watch the video, they can raise their paper plate emojis when they think it represents how the character in the video might be feeling. When several students raise their emoji, discuss how emotions are very individual and that a variety of emotions are okay in any given situation (i.e. no 'right' answer here! Emotions give us feedback for what we may be thinking and are influenced by our different life experiences).



Digital Delivery:

Prompt students to use the emoji reactions in the virtual meeting software to represent how the character in the video might be feeling at specific times.



Provide a large copy of the States of Mental Health Pyramid on a poster board or show and provide students with the *States of Mental Health* pyramid student activity sheet so they can fill in their own copy (paper or digital).

Resources:

- Classroom Slide Deck
- Digital Activity Sheets
- Printable Activity Sheets



Digital Delivery: Use a whiteboard or the slide to display the pyramid.



Discuss examples of when the students might experience the various states:

- Someone's cat doesn't come home one night
- Someone doesn't get chosen for the basketball team
- Someone's grandparent dies
- Someone moves to another province
- Someone has a big presentation to finish

Elicit more examples from the students.



Digital Delivery:

Use a shared digital whiteboard / slide / document that students can add to throughout the unit. Keep it linked somewhere that is easy for students to access. Revisit after Module 6 to compare to *The Big 5*.



Prompt students to fill in one situation / example and one feeling word for each of the categories on their *States of Mental Health* student activity sheet.

Resources:

- Classroom Slide Deck
- Digital Activity Sheets
- Printable Activity Sheets



Explain:

- Mental illness / disorder is a medical condition diagnosed by trained health professionals (e.g. doctors, psychologists) using medical diagnostic criteria.
- Mental illness is a brain-based disorder just like asthma is a lung-based disorder.
- Mental illness is when a person experiences problems with their thoughts, feelings and behaviours that are serious, major and lasting.
- Inform students that in future lessons they will learn about common mental illnesses.
- Describe for students how it is possible to have a mental illness, mental health problem and mental distress all at the same time. (e.g. a person could have ADHD, be grieving the loss of their dog, feel worried about an upcoming test and at times forget all these issues and have a great moment with friends). All of these are states of mental health.
- We will learn how we can take care of our mental health just like our physical health.



Prompt: Review the definition of mental health you wrote down earlier. Would you change your definition based on what you've learned? How is it different? In what ways is it the same?

Resources:

- Digital MHL Journal
- Printable MHL Journal

Alternative Activities

Create a Class Mental Health Literacy Poster

Display a large poster paper for the duration of time covering the EMHLR. Continue to add healthy strategies that boost mental health whenever they are mentioned throughout the mental health unit. After Module 6, revisit this poster to see how many of the items on the poster are congruent with *The Big 5* for mental health. A shared Jam Board could be used digitally.

'The Manner of the Word' Charades

Make a list of simple actions that could be done in a classroom setting (e.g. pick up a pencil, close a door, wave hello, etc.). Then have another list of adverbs / emotion words (e.g. angrily, sheepishly, slyly, joyfully, confidently, etc.). Students will then pick / be assigned an action and a random corresponding emotion / adverb. Each student then performs the action while other students guess 'the manner of the word'. Help students connect that the thoughts we have about an event influences the intensity of our emotional reaction. We can all improve our skills in tuning in to how others are feeling, as well as managing our own emotional responses.

'Guess the Emotion' Digital Option

Have students pick an emotion word (or assign emotion words) and have students post a corresponding gif, image or emoji. Other students can then guess their emotion word.



Module 2:

The Stigma of Mental Illness

- Stigma involves negative thoughts, feelings and behaviours towards mental illness
- People with mental illness can live a fulfilling life
- We all can help to reduce stigma around mental illness



Links for Activities:



Classroom Slide Deck (see Module 2):

- [Google Slide Deck](#)
- [PDF Slide Deck](#)



Student Activity Sheets

- [Digital](#)
- [Colour \(printable\)](#)
- [Black & White \(printable\)](#)



MHL Journal

- [Digital](#)
- [Colour \(printable\)](#)
- [Black & White \(printable\)](#)

- See [Appendix E](#) for download instructions
- Please see individual activities for video links, sample quiz links and all other resources

Conceptual Knowledge	Procedural Knowledge	Handle with Care
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Anyone can have a mental illness • Stigma involves negative thoughts, feelings and behaviour towards mental illness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Each person can be appreciated as a unique individual, instead of judged by a label • By better understanding the stigma of mental illness, we can reduce its impact 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students who already feel stigmatised may react emotionally to this topic



Activity I - Anyone Can Have a Mental Disorder

Purpose: Draw attention to the fact that anyone can have a mental disorder

Conceptual Connection:

- You cannot tell if a person has a mental disorder just by looking at them
- People are more than just the characteristics of the diagnosed mental disorder



Watch the *Meet the Mental Health Literacy Kids* video that introduces the characters in the EMHLR.

Resource: <https://youtu.be/DTUtxDRJRjE>



Provide students with the *Guess Who?* student activity sheet and ask them to complete it based on what they have learned about the characters and their best guess. Share the answers to the questions drawing attention to the final question 'Who has a mental disorder?' (Answer: they all do.)

Resources:

- Digital Activity Sheets
- Printable Activity Sheets
- [Sample Quiz Link](#)



Digital Delivery:

- Waterfall - Use the *Guess Who?* slide. Ask each question as a waterfall activity, having students type the name of the character in the chat to answer the question.
- Use a digital quiz.
- Asynchronously, have students complete the *Guess Who?* mix and match sheet. Then discuss together as a group.



Invite students to share which character they guessed had a mental disorder.

Reflect: What was it like to try and answer the question, 'Who has a mental disorder?' Did we have enough information? Did we know the characters well enough? Did we make any assumptions when we were guessing?



Summarise the key understandings:

- Anyone can have a mental disorder.
- You cannot tell if someone has a mental disorder by just looking at them.
- It is important to view each person as a unique individual instead of a label.



Prompt: What did you learn about each character? What surprised you? Which character(s) do you feel most curious about? Who would you like to get to know better?

Resources:

- Digital MHL Journal
- Printable MHL Journal

Activity II - What is Stigma?

Purpose:

Introduce students to the concept of stigma and deepen their understanding of what it means

Conceptual Connection:

- Stigma can lead to negative thoughts, feelings or behaviours towards individuals with mental disorders
- The stigma surrounding mental disorders may be decreased by expanding our personal understandings
- People are more than just the characteristics of the diagnosed mental disorder



Watch the *What is Stigma?* video which portrays the character Angela with typical ADHD behaviours. Pause the video at the end of *Part One*.

Resource: <https://youtu.be/bL2JWV4fP1k>



Ask the students to fill in the first section of the *What Is Stigma?* student activity sheet for *Part One*. As a class, share some of the student descriptions for this character.

Resources:

- Digital Activity Sheets
- Printable Activity Sheets



Digital Delivery: Instruct students to complete the *What is Stigma? Part One* activity in their digital workbooks.



Think-Pair-Share or in small groups: How do the other students feel about Angela during the morning?



Digital Delivery: Think-pair-share (using virtual breakout rooms) or as a large group.



Watch *What is Stigma? Part Two* as a group, which portrays the same character engaging in positive behavioural interactions.

Resource: <https://youtu.be/bL2JWV4fP1k?t=131>

(Note: *What is Stigma? Part Two* starts at 02:11)



Invite the students to fill in the second section of the *What is Stigma?* student activity sheet.

Resources:

- Digital Activity Sheets
- Printable Activity Sheets



Digital Delivery: Instruct students to complete the *What is Stigma? Part Two* activity in their digital workbooks.



Think-Pair-Share or small group discussion:

How do the other students feel about Angela during the afternoon?



Digital Delivery: Use virtual breakout rooms.



Discuss together the descriptions of the character in *Part Two*.



Digital Delivery: Facilitate a large group discussion.



Say:

'This character has Attention-Deficit / Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD). This is a brain-based disorder that affects a person's ability to manage their behaviour. We will be learning more about ADHD in a later module, but for example, it might be difficult for the person to wait their turn, stand still in a line or stop and think before they say something. Like everyone, individuals with ADHD also have many strengths. They can be kind, generous and helpful. This is why you cannot judge a person because they have ADHD or any other mental disorder'.



Show the definition of stigma and tell the students:

'Unfortunately, in society people often hold a set of negative beliefs, thoughts, feelings and behaviours about mental illness. We look at the behaviours related to the mental illness and not the whole person. This can lead us to treating people with mental illness unfairly. This is called stigma.'

Resource: Classroom Slide Deck



Ask the students, 'How do you think a person facing stigma might feel?'

Invite the students to think about whether or not they would have been a friend to the character in *Part One* of the video if students judged them based only on ADHD behaviour. How would they feel?



Review the key concepts with the students:

- Stigma about mental disorders can negatively affect our thoughts, feelings and behaviours towards others.
- If we are aware of the stigma of mental illness and take the time to get to know others, we can make better choices and reduce stigma.



Prompt: If you were Angela, what concerns would you have? What might you want from your friends? How could a teacher support you? What would you need to feel safe and included?

Resources:

- Digital MHL Journal
- Printable MHL Journal

Alternative Activities

Put Yourself in Angela's Yellow Shoes!

Imagine you are Angela. Reflect on how your morning and your afternoon went. What might you wonder about? What might you want from your friends? How could a teacher support you? What would you need to feel safe and included? What strengths or talents might you feel proud of? Students can discuss these questions as a large group, in small groups or as a written reflection.

Get the Full Picture

Divide the class into five groups - one group for each character. Give each group a paper or poster with a blank picture frame. Invite students to draw or paste a picture of their assigned character in the middle of the page. Then have each group write or draw what they know about their character. Example prompts can include:

- interests / hobbies
- skills / strengths
- family
- friends
- pets
- fun facts
- positive characteristics (e.g. creative, friendly, funny, etc.)

Now ask each group to write down their character's mental disorder(s) somewhere on the page / poster. Reflect on how a person's mental disorder is only one part of their fuller picture.



Become an Upstander Against Stigma

Students can create posters, comic strips / graphic novel scenes or write in their MHL journals about what they might say (scripts) or do (actions) to challenge stigma when they encounter it.

Module 3:

Mental Health and the Brain

- The brain changes over time
- Our thoughts, feelings, behaviours and reactions to the environment are linked with the brain
- The brain and the body are connected
- Mental health is a component of health



Links for Activities:



Classroom Slide Deck (see Module 3):

- [Google Slide Deck](#)
- [PDF Slide Deck](#)



Student Activity Sheets

- [Digital](#)
- [Colour \(printable\)](#)
- [Black & White \(printable\)](#)



MHL Journal

- [Digital](#)
- [Colour \(printable\)](#)
- [Black & White \(printable\)](#)

- See [Appendix E](#) for download instructions
- Please see individual activities for video links, sample quiz links and all other resources

Conceptual Knowledge	Procedural Knowledge	Handle with Care
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Our thoughts, feelings, behaviours and reactions are linked with the brain • The brain and the body are connected • Mental health is a component of overall health • The brain changes over time 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explain how the brain and body are connected • Identify basic parts of the brain and their functions • Describe ways that the brain adapts to the environment and changes over time 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Avoid excessive explanation of neurology and biochemistry of brain development • Avoid giving students the impression that they are less competent because their brain is still developing! (e.g. point out that young brains are better at language learning)



Activity I - Anyone Can Have a Mental Disorder

Purpose: Develop students' understanding of the ways the brain and body are connected and explore basic structures and functions of the brain

Conceptual Connection:

- The brain and body are connected
- Our thoughts, feelings and behaviours are linked with the brain



Ask students, 'What are the major organs in the human body?' Record their answers on the active board / whiteboard. Identify any organs they have missed such as the heart, lungs, kidneys, liver, large and small intestine, skin and the brain.



Digital Delivery:

- Have students respond in the chat using the Waterfall technique. Use a tool like Google Jamboard or Google Slides to record student responses on-screen.
- Or Jamboard Brainstorm - prepare a Jamboard with the question 'What are the major organs in the human body?' and share it with students, asking them to use the sticky note tool to add their answers. Group correct answers together and delete incorrect answers.



Provide student activity sheets with instructions for creating *Build-A-Brain* hats.

Resources:

- Digital Brain Puzzle Slide (in Classroom Slide Deck, Module 3)
- Digital Activity Sheets
- Printable Activity Sheets



Digital Delivery:

- Brain Puzzle: Instruct students to first move the labels to identify the regions of the brain. Next, have students match the core functions to each region (see [Appendix C](#) for answer sheet).

Pro-tip for teachers:

For best results when printing the *Build-A-Brain* hat activity sheets, select the option 'fit to printed page' on your printer



- **Frontal lobe:** Thinking and cognition (e.g. thinking, decision-making, problem-solving, understanding)
- **Parietal lobe:** Processes touch, taste and temperature (e.g. smelling popcorn, touching your nose with your eyes closed, crossing your hands, squeezing to create pressure, feeling if the tap water is warming up)
- **Temporal lobe:** Processes sound, visual recognition such as faces and plays a role in understanding and giving meaning to language (e.g. listening to music, giving a speech, communicating with different languages)
- **Occipital lobe:** Processes vision, distinguishes colour, and processes motion
- **Amygdala:** Plays an important role in emotions and behaviour (e.g. feeling happy, relaxed, scared). It signals the body when there is a threat in the environment

Resource: Digital Brain Puzzle Slide (in Classroom Slide Deck, Module 3)



Prompt: Can you draw the brain with its different lobes? What is something you didn't know about the brain before you did this activity?

Resources:

- Digital MHL Journal
- Printable MHL Journal

Activity II - Growing a Brain

Purpose: Draw students' attention to how the brain changes as we grow and develop
Conceptual Connection: The brain adapts to the environment and changes over time



Watch the *Grow a Brain* video.

Resource: <https://youtu.be/q1op7mN-Ps4>



Digital Delivery: [Sample Jamboard Link](#)



Review a key example of brain development from the video with the students:

When a baby is hungry they cry for food. When a five year old child is hungry they can use their words to ask their caregiver for the kind of food they want. When an adult is hungry, they buy and cook their food.



Using the *Grow a Brain* student activity sheet, prompt students to create their own examples of how the brain might adapt over time.

Resources:

- Printable Activity Sheets
- Digital Activity Sheets



Digital Delivery: Moderate a whole group discussion (or a virtual think-pair-share using breakout rooms) of different ways our brains adapt over time. Capture ideas using a blank slide or Jamboard. Students can insert clipart into the boxes or use Google Drawings (or a similar tool) to create their own visual for each box and then add text below.



Prompt: Thinking about the other MHL characters, what are some ideas of how you imagine their brains may change or adapt as they grow up? What skills will they develop?

Resources:

- Digital MHL Journal
- Printable MHL Journal

Alternative Activities

Draw a Brain

Using a YouTube video or step-by-step guide, draw a picture of the brain. Label the parts of the brain. Through an internet search (that can be completed when computers are available or at home) students are responsible for finding out functions of the major parts of the brain (frontal lobe, parietal lobe, occipital lobe, cerebellum, temporal lobe, brain stem and amygdala).

Sample drawing activities:

- How to draw the human brain | Easy step-by-step tutorial <https://youtu.be/GmYz07MiUnI>
- How to draw a brain (easy) <https://youtu.be/wIBFsAzhXWg>

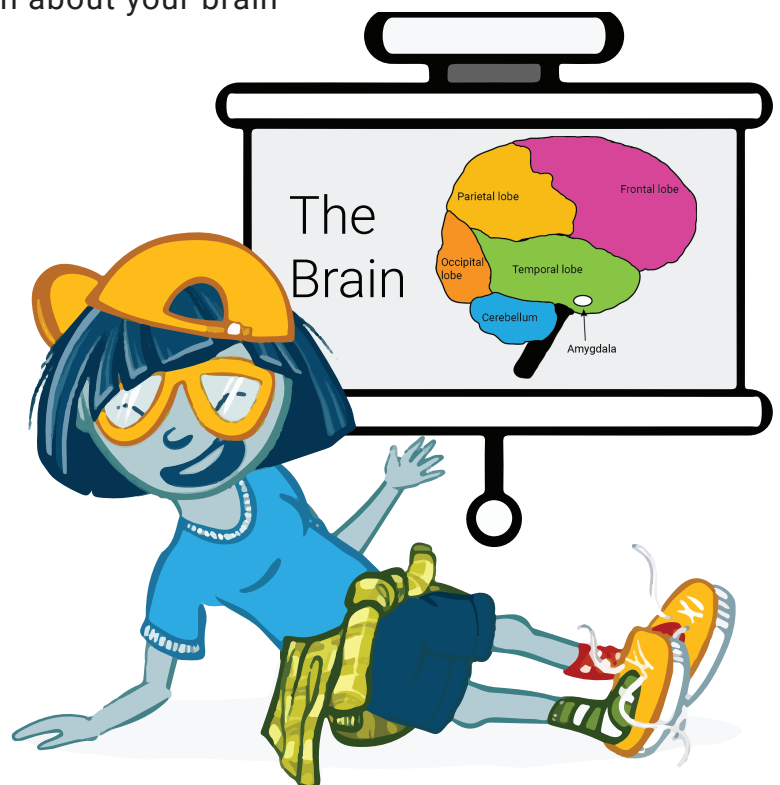
Brain Fun Facts Videos

Watch videos about the brain that teach fun facts. After each video, teachers can review and students can record the facts in their MHL journals. Sample brain fun facts videos:

- Sentis: How the brain works <https://youtu.be/XSzsI5aGcK4>
- LearnStorm Growth Mindset: The truth about your brain <https://youtu.be/rf8FX2sI3gU>

Slideshow

Students create a slideshow to share their own examples of how the brain might adapt over time.



Alternative Activities

The Brain Game

Fun facts review! In this Jeopardy-style game, students demonstrate their learning about the brain. The class is divided in half. A 5 x 5 grid is drawn on the board and squares are labelled 1 to 25. On a separate piece of paper, the teacher has a 5 x 5 grid with point values for each square (higher point values are more fun - 300, 400, 500, etc.). One team chooses a square between 1 and 25. The game show host (teacher) asks a skill-testing question that the team must agree on to answer (e.g. what are two functions of the brain?). If the answer is correct, the team gets the point value on the points card the teacher is holding. This game can also be used for different topics throughout the unit, or as a celebration of learning at the end of the EMHLR.



Alternative Activities

Mini 3D Brain

Choose plasticine, modelling clay, styrofoam balls, tennis balls, walnuts or other mediums. Use toothpicks to label and describe brain functions. Or, modify a hockey helmet or similar with paper, paint, toothpicks, labels, etc. to demonstrate parts of the brain.

Create a Rap, Chant, Story or Skit

Or... some other imaginative way of showing how the brain changes over time! Students might choose to perform their creative responses for the class, or record them on Flipgrid to share with others.

Create Your Own Movie-Maker, iMovie, Google Slides or Claymation Video

Write and produce a video explaining how the brain changes over time (e.g. the brain learns new skills over the course of development).



Module 4:

Common Mental / Neurodevelopmental Disorders

- All mental disorders reflect difficulties in thoughts, emotions and feelings, daily activities, physical health, behaviours and signalling
- People with mental disorders can be treated and the sooner people receive proper treatment and support, the better the outcomes



Links for Activities:



Classroom Slide Deck (see Module 4):

- [Google Slide Deck](#)
- [PDF Slide Deck](#)



Student Activity Sheets

- [Digital](#)
- [Colour \(printable\)](#)
- [Black & White \(printable\)](#)



MHL Journal

- [Digital](#)
- [Colour \(printable\)](#)
- [Black & White \(printable\)](#)

- See [Appendix E](#) for download instructions
- Please see individual activities for video links, sample quiz links and all other resources

Conceptual Knowledge	Procedural Knowledge	Handle with Care
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All mental disorders reflect difficulties in thoughts, emotions, behaviours and signalling • People with mental illness can be treated and the sooner people receive proper treatment and support, the better the outcomes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To distinguish between normal life challenges and mental / neurodevelopmental disorders • To demonstrate an understanding of common mental / neurodevelopmental disorders affecting children • To identify ways that people with mental illness can live a fulfilling life with appropriate treatments 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This topic explores the common mental / neurodevelopmental disorders of childhood. Expect that there may be students in each classroom diagnosed with these disorders who may want to share their experiences or who may feel uncomfortable with the topic. Pre-discussion with these students about their feelings and wishes regarding this topic is advised



Activity I - What Do I Know About Common Mental / Neurodevelopmental Disorders? (True or False)

Purpose: Assess student knowledge prior to watching the core concept videos on each disorder

Conceptual Connection:

- There is a difference between normal life challenges and mental / neurodevelopmental disorders
- All mental disorders reflect difficulties in thoughts, emotions, behaviours and signalling
- People with mental disorders can be treated and live a fulfilling life



Provide students with the five True or False statements regarding the specific mental / neurodevelopmental disorder(s) being taught (see [Appendix D](#)). This can be done as a whole class discussion, an individual MHL Journal response, or through a group movement activity.

Resource: Classroom Slide Deck



Ask students to decide if each statement is true or false and prompt them to explain their choice.

Students can individually record a written response in MHL Journal, or they can physically move to one side of the room or the other based on their response.

The teacher can tally the class responses as a whole group and record 'why' answers.

Students can choose to stand on either side of the classroom, indicating their position on the statements 'True' or 'False' and share their thoughts.

Resource: Classroom Slide Deck



Digital Delivery:

- Use an online quiz instead of the movement activity. Quiz links:
 - [Anxiety disorder](#)
 - [Specific learning disorder](#)
 - [Depression](#)
 - [ADHD](#)
 - [OCD](#)
 - [ASD](#)
 - [Specific phobia](#)
- Or, use the waterfall technique for students to synchronously answer true or false, or a thumbs up, thumbs down reaction.



Prompt: Why is it important to have factual information mental / neurodevelopmental disorders?

Resources:

- Digital MHL Journal
- Printable MHL Journal

Activity II - Character Study Videos and Viewing Guides: What Do I Know About Common Mental / Neurodevelopmental Disorders?

Purpose: Through the use of engaging character stories, illustrate the signs and symptoms of each disorder and how each can impact daily functioning

Conceptual Connection:

- There is a difference between normal life challenges and mental/neurodevelopmental disorders
- All mental disorders reflect difficulties in thoughts, emotions, behaviours and signalling
- People with mental disorders can be treated and live a fulfilling life



Provide a copy of the viewing guides about the disorders, titled *Understanding _____*, and discuss each section (seven activity sheets in total).

Resource:

- Printable Activity Sheets
- Digital Activity Sheets



Digital Delivery: Instruct students to keep the viewing guides in their digital MHL notebook open in a separate tab to make notes after each video.



Watch each video based on available lesson time (e.g. 1 or 2 videos at a time).

- Anxiety disorder / learning disorder (Jared): <https://youtu.be/7DN2Giuwx9E>
- Depression (Owen): <https://youtu.be/EyqzjKWQgC0>
- ADHD (Angela): <https://youtu.be/RiWA1BoBeew>
- OCD (Hazel): <https://youtu.be/MhzudxYmRBk>
- ASD / specific Phobia (Alex): <https://youtu.be/oEp0hmTK0Gsu>



After each video, have students complete the corresponding character viewing guide(s).

Resource:

- Printable Activity Sheets
- Digital Activity Sheets



Digital Delivery: After each video, allow students some time to complete the reflection, or use small group breakout rooms.



Prompt: Imagine you are one of the characters. What signs or symptoms of their disorder might show up at school? With friends? With family? (Hint: 'signs' are what others can see / what a video camera would pick up. 'Symptoms' are what someone feels inside).

Resources:

- Digital MHL Journal
- Printable MHL Journal

Activity III - True or False Reviewed: What Do I Know About Common Mental / Neurodevelopmental Disorders?

Purpose:

- Review student knowledge after watching the core concept videos on each disorder
- Dispel myths about the five common mental / neurodevelopmental disorders

Conceptual Connection:

- There is a difference between normal life challenges and mental / neurodevelopmental disorders
- All mental disorders reflect difficulties in thoughts, emotions, behaviours and signalling
- People with mental disorders can be treated and live a good life



Following the core concept videos on each specific mental / neurodevelopmental disorder – repeat the True or False process (see [Appendix D](#)) having students agree or disagree with the same statements in the same format.



Digital Delivery:

Use an online quiz instead of the movement activity. Quiz links:

- [Anxiety disorder](#)
- [Specific learning disorder](#)
- [Depression](#)
- [ADHD](#)
- [OCD](#)
- [ASD](#)
- [Specific phobia](#)



Ask students to reflect on any changes to their thinking. 'Why is it important to be knowledgeable about the facts when discussing mental / neurodevelopmental disorders?'



Prompt: What are the signs and symptoms of each disorder? What helps? How can I be helpful to someone who has this disorder? (Hint: 'signs' are what others can see / what a video camera would pick up. 'Symptoms' are what someone feels inside).

Resources:

- Digital MHL Journal
- Printable MHL Journal

Alternative Activities

View and Discuss

While watching each video, students can work individually, together, or as a whole class to identify for each character: character name, strengths, name of disorder and interests.

Use the following two questions to guide discussion and learning. 'What are the signs and symptoms of the disorder? What helps?' (Hint: 'signs' are what others can see / what a video camera would pick up. 'Symptoms' are what someone feels inside).

Mental Disorders Review Game

Play the Jeopardy-style Brain Game (as described in Module 2) to review the disorder names, 'signs and symptoms' and 'what helps?' associated with each character.

Myth vs. Fact

Drawing on the questions and answers in the True or False game, students can design their own myth vs. facts cards or posters about each of the common mental / neurodevelopmental disorders. These can be displayed in the classroom or added to the student MHL Journal.



Module 5:

Helping Self and Helping Others

- Everyone has mental health that can be supported and promoted
- There are many ways of seeking help for mental health problems and mental disorders
- People with mental illness can live a healthy life with appropriate treatment



Links for Activities:



Classroom Slide Deck (see Module 5):

- [Google Slide Deck](#)
- [PDF Slide Deck](#)



Student Activity Sheets

- [Digital](#)
- [Colour \(printable\)](#)
- [Black & White \(printable\)](#)



MHL Journal

- [Digital](#)
- [Colour \(printable\)](#)
- [Black & White \(printable\)](#)

- See [Appendix E](#) for download instructions
- Please see individual activities for video links, sample quiz links and all other resources

Conceptual Knowledge	Procedural Knowledge	Handle with Care
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Everyone has mental health that can be supported and promoted • There are many people who can provide support for mental health problems and mental illnesses • Getting help early for yourself and others increases positive mental health outcomes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To understand that mental health can be supported in various ways • To learn to seek help from reliable sources when needed • To know how to ask for help in an effective manner 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be aware of students' current situation regarding mental health problems and illnesses



Activity I - Helping Hands

Purpose:

- To encourage help-seeking behaviour for mental health
- To help students identify the reliable helpers in their lives

Conceptual Connection:

- Everyone has mental health that can be supported and promoted
- There are many people who can provide support for mental health problems and illnesses



Ask students the various ways that they can ask for help when they don't feel well physically. For example, teachers can pose questions such as, 'when people have a random cough, sneeze or a mild stomach ache, what do people usually do?' (possible answers: wash hands, drink lots of water, put on warm clothes, etc.). 'When people have a fever, fatigue, sore throat, muscle aches or pain, what do people usually do?' (possible answers: sleep, increase fluids, take medications - e.g. Tylenol to relieve pain and fever). 'What if a person has cancer, what do they do to treat the illness?' (Answer: medical procedures and medications provided by doctors and other qualified health professionals).

Explain to students that they can also seek help for mental health problems and illnesses in the same way, and that it is important to know when to seek help and from whom.



Watch the *Levels of Help* video.

Resource: <https://youtu.be/0KaSzKx4f8M>



Show or draw a hand on the board. Explain that you use your 5 fingers because they are always with you to remind you that you have people you can trust and talk to when you feel upset or afraid, or if someone you know needs help. Review with students the help-seeking pathways in your school.



Digital Delivery: Display lesson slide for a hand graphic.



Provide the *Helping Hand* student activity sheet. Explain that the people they talk to can be someone they trust from home, a relative, a teacher or a person at school. Or, someone from the community such as a coach, doctor, minister, friend or friend's parent. Ensure there are some adults identified by reminding the students that even though friends are important, there are some problems that are too big to be solved with other children.

Resources:

- Printable Activity Sheets
- Digital Activity Sheets



Digital Delivery: Use the *Helping Hand* digital student activity sheet to complete this activity with students.



Ask the students to write down the names of professionals that they can go and talk to when they need help; one name on each finger and one on the thumb. On the palm of the hand, write down 2 to 3 natural supports.



Prompt: Who are your trusted support people? Which friends can you go to for help? Which trusted adults would you feel comfortable approaching for help? Which professional helpers are in your school?

Resources:

- Digital MHL Journal
- Printable MHL Journal

Activity II - Which Helper?

Purpose: To learn to identify when students can solve problems independently and, when they should seek help from others, and who is the most appropriate helper in any given situation

Conceptual Connection: Getting help early for yourself and others increases positive mental health outcomes



Remind students that sometimes our problems are too big to solve on our own and we need to ask a trusted adult for help. Asking for help is ok! This is how we grow and learn.

Share with students that sometimes we do not ask for help because we are not sure how to do so. Just like building other skills, learning how to ask for help can be practiced.



Provide the *Asking for Help* student activity sheets (3 total), which include sample help-seeking scripts. Review these with the students.

Review with students that this role play activity includes three levels of asking for help:

1. Asking for yourself
2. Encouraging a friend to ask for help
3. Asking for help for a friend you are concerned about

Resources:

- Printable Activity Sheets
- Digital Activity Sheets



Digital Delivery: Provide students with the *Asking for Help* digital student activity sheets that include the help-seeking scripts and scenarios.



Roleplay help-seeking conversations in pairs.

- Identify who will be the help-seeker and who is the helper. Choose a script / scenario to practice
- Switch roles with a new script / scenario

Debrief with students how they felt during their help-seeking conversations. Do they have more confidence when they practice ways of asking for help?



Digital Delivery: Assign scenarios to each partner group then send them to virtual breakout rooms to complete the role-play activity. Return students to the main group for the debrief and final discussion question.



Ask students if there are any other factors that might get in the way of asking for help. Problem-solve these obstacles as a group.



Prompt: When have you asked for help in your life? Was it hard or easy? When have you surprised yourself by solving a problem? When have you been a helper?

Resources:

- Digital MHL Journal
- Printable MHL Journal

Alternative Activities

Super Helpers

Students may create a poster (or posters) of the various helpers in their school or community. Each helper can even be depicted as a superhero and their 'superpowers' can describe the specific type of help they provide (e.g. reading support, problem-solving support, counselling support, playground support, etc.). These can be posted around the classroom, school or kept in the MHL Journal.

Think-Pair-Share

What are some highlights from our learning about mental health so far? Record suggestions on board and / or the Mental Health Literacy Poster and / or MHL Journals as appropriate.



Module 6:

Getting Mentally Healthy

- What is good for physical health is good for mental health
- Coping with stress appropriately will help build resilience and new skills
- 'The Big 5' pillars of health promote both physical and mental health



Links for Activities:



Classroom Slide Deck (see Module 6):

- [Google Slide Deck](#)
- [PDF Slide Deck](#)



Student Activity Sheets

- [Digital](#)
- [Colour \(printable\)](#)
- [Black & White \(printable\)](#)



MHL Journal

- [Digital](#)
- [Colour \(printable\)](#)
- [Black & White \(printable\)](#)

- See [Appendix E](#) for download instructions
- Please see individual activities for video links, sample quiz links and all other resources

Conceptual Knowledge	Procedural Knowledge	Handle with Care
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coping with stress appropriately can help us build new skills and increase resilience • The brain and body are connected • What is good for physical health is good for mental health • Positive lifestyle choices can enhance good mental health 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To understand that we need some stress to perform well • To learn that stress can be managed • To recognize the brain-body connection related to the stress response • To develop strategies to promote strong mental health 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students come from a variety of backgrounds (e.g. from households that may experience income instability, food insecurity, insufficient social support networks, etc.). When engaging in classroom activities, it is important to consider the many factors that are outside of a student's control, which may influence what The Big Five looks like for them • Avoid judgement of student lifestyles / circumstances



Activity I - Managing the Stress Response

Purpose:

- Help students understand that we need some stress to perform well
- Learn that stress can be managed

Conceptual Connection: Coping with stress appropriately can help us build new skills and increase resilience.



Ask students to describe their understanding of what stress is.



Watch the *Understanding Your Stress Response* video.

Resource: <https://youtu.be/sJDWUOp6Ndw>



Ask students if their understanding of stress has changed after watching the video:

- 'How can the stress response be helpful?'
- 'When is stress more challenging?'
- 'What are some helpful ways to manage the stress response?'



Invite students to complete the *Making Friends With Stress* and the *Your Stress Coping Skills* student activity sheets.

Resources:

- Printable Activity Sheets
- Digital Activity Sheets



Digital Delivery:

- Invite students to complete the digital *Making Friends With Stress* and the *Your Stress Coping Skills* student activity sheets.
- Alternative: use an online quiz to complete one or both activities.



Prompt: When has stress been helpful in your life? What are your coping strategies to help you face a stressor? How do you know when a stressor is too big to handle alone and you need support?

Resources:

- Digital MHL Journal
- Printable MHL Journal

Activity II - The Brain-Body Connection

Purpose: To recognize the brain-body connection as it relates to the stress response

Conceptual Connection:

- The brain and body are connected
- What is good for physical health is good for mental health



Share with students that 'Our bodies often give us clues about how we are feeling.' Then ask students 'How does the body let us know when the stress response has been activated?'

Encourage students to tune in to their own bodies and share examples of how they experience stress physically (e.g. heart pounding, sweaty palms, face turning red, headache, quick breaths, wobbly voice, butterflies in stomach, etc.). Note: it can be helpful for students to reflect on a time when their stress response showed up (e.g. when they felt nervous for a sports game or performance, or they tried something new).



Provide instructions on how to complete the *Know Your Stress Response* student activity sheet. Students can draw on / colour / annotate the body outline in the areas where they tend to feel their stress response.

Remind students that every person's physical experience of the stress response is a little bit different, so their drawings will each look a little different too.

Resources:

- Printable Activity Sheets
- Digital Activity Sheets



Ask 'How does your stress response show up in your body? In what ways is this similar to others' experiences of the stress response? In what ways is it different?'



Prompt: How did each of the characters experience the stress response in their body? How is this similar or different from the ways you experience the stress response?

Resources:

- Digital MHL Journal
- Printable MHL Journal

Activity III - The Big 5

Purpose: Develop strategies to promote mental health

Conceptual Connection:

- What is good for physical health is good for brain health
- Positive lifestyle choices can enhance good mental health



Review with students the brain-body connection in response to stress.

Ask students, 'How do we keep our bodies healthy?'



Watch the *Introducing... The Big 5!* video.

Resource: <https://youtu.be/TuQtFA2CWVw>



Engage students in a discussion of how what is good for physical health is good for brain health. Encourage them to share personal examples.

Record The Big 5 on the active board / whiteboard.

- restorative sleep
- healthy nutrition
- vigorous exercise
- strong, supportive relationships
- helping others



Provide students with the *Big 5 Mobiles* student activity sheets. Direct students to illustrate one activity / strategy for promoting each of The Big 5. These can be drawn, or students may use magazine/computer pictures.

Resources:

- Printable Activity Sheets
- Digital Activity Sheets



Digital Delivery: Provide students with the digital version of the *Big 5 Mobiles* student activity sheets. Students can add clipart, digital drawings or photos they take on their own device to the boxes.



The *Big 5 Mobiles* can be displayed in the classroom. Afterwards, they can be put on a metal ring and attached to the students' binders, backpacks, etc. as a reminder of the importance of The Big 5.



Prompt: Is it easy to embrace The Big 5? Why or why not? How are you able to include The Big 5 in your life? What ideas for The Big 5 did you learn from the characters in the video?

Resources:

- Digital MHL Journal
- Printable MHL Journal

Alternative Activities

The Most Helpful Class

Remind students that helping others is one of The Big 5. Brainstorm ways that your class can help others in the school and the community. Remember that helping others can be big or small (e.g. being kind, holding the door, playing with someone who doesn't have a friend at recess, helping clean up at the end of the day, picking up garbage when you see it on the ground, helping at home, etc.). Maybe the students would like to fundraise for a cause of their choice, help at an extended care facility, help a class buddy, clean up a beach or park, help a conservation / stewardship group, etc. The possibilities are endless!

Thanks A Lot Stress

Remind students that, most of the time, stress is actually helpful. When someone helps us through a challenge, we usually say thank you. Have students create a thank you card or note for their stress! Encourage them to include ways stress has helped them build new skills. Here's a sentence starter if needed: 'Thank you stress, you really taught me how to...'

Big 5 School Announcements

Create a radio play / tips and tricks about The Big 5 that can be shared on morning announcements.

Big 5 Puppet Show

Create a puppet show to teach a younger class about The Big 5 for mental health.

Make a Big 5 Pie

In their MHL Journal, have students draw a pie shape with five slices. In each slice, have students draw themselves doing actions that support The Big 5 for mental health. This activity could also be completed using a computer program, magazine pictures for collage, etc.



Alternative Activities

Once Upon a Time...

Students can think-pair-share stories of when they faced a stressor. How did they feel before they faced the stressor? How did they feel afterwards? What calming skills, thinking skills or problem-solving skills did they use? Did they ask anyone else for help along the way? Now that they've faced the stressor, what advice would they share with others in a similar situation?

Design Graffiti or a Tattoo

Students might also choose to create a graffiti page or a tattoo with a mantra or encouraging thought to help them get through a stressor. These can be posted around the classroom or kept in the MHL Journal.

Living the Big 5 Bulletin Board

Set goals as a class and as individuals to practice The Big 5. Over the course of the year, students can add stickies to the bulletin board to describe things they are doing for themselves and others to promote The Big 5. Class activities to support The Big 5 can also be added (e.g. helping others, making a class meal, etc.). At various points throughout the year, encourage students to reflect on what they notice about The Big 5 in their lives. Is it easy to embrace The Big 5? Did you reach the Big 5 goals you set for yourself? Why or why not? Did you realise Big 5 goals that you didn't set for yourself? Do you notice any patterns? How can you set realistic goals for your Big 5?



EMHLR Celebrations of Learning

You did it! Now that students have completed the 6 modules, you may wish to conclude the EMHLR with an activity to reinforce the key concepts and celebrate the learning together.

Here are some ideas:

- Create a class mental health literacy magazine / e-zine using Canva or a similar platform. Students can choose which sections they are responsible for (e.g. the MHL pyramid, brain functions, mental / neurodevelopmental disorders, the stress response, the Big 5, help-seeking, fun facts, drawings, etc.). Students may choose to create their own magazine or work in small groups.
- Play a championship mental health literacy 'key learnings' Jeopardy-style game. The questions can highlight the core concepts from all 6 modules. Include a Final Jeopardy round to increase the fun.
- Draw a mind map to demonstrate learning about mental health literacy (e.g. Drawing a Mind Map from Start to Finish (mindmapinspiration.com)). Encourage students to include key learnings from all 6 modules.
- Design a mental health literacy board game. Brainstorm what makes a game fun (e.g. parts of the game, elements of skill, elements of luck, etc.). Build key content criteria together. The MHL characters may be used as play pieces in the game.
- Perform a mental health literacy show. Brainstorm the elements of a good skit or puppet show (e.g. characters, storyline, problem, resolution, humour, drama, tension, etc.) as well as core MHL concepts to be included. Students may create their show in small groups or as a whole class. Share with other classes, extended care homes or school-wide events to promote mental health literacy.



Appendix A



Tips for Digital Delivery

Digital Student Activity Sheets and Digital MHL Journal templates are included with this resource. These have been adapted from the printable versions of the student activity sheets and MHL Journal template. The digital student activity sheets and MHL Journal template are provided in Google Slides format with non-editable backgrounds and editable text boxes where students can type their responses.

Online quiz platforms are highly engaging tools that can be used to introduce, consolidate, and assess student learning. This resource includes links to prepared quizzes on Kahoot (a free online quiz platform).

Virtual breakout rooms are available in most video conferencing platforms and allow online teachers to adapt small group activities to the virtual environment. In this resource, they are recommended for digital delivery of **think-pair-share activities** and small group discussions. Creating individual virtual breakout rooms within the full class session also offers the opportunity for quiet, distraction-free virtual spaces where students can complete individual work (e.g. MHL Journal responses) without having to leave the video conference and where support from the teacher is only a click away.

Virtual whiteboards allow groups to collaborate in real time and are recommended for **brainstorming** and other collaborative idea-generating activities. Some virtual video conferencing platforms have integrated whiteboard tools (e.g. Google Meet Jamboard, Brightspace Virtual Classroom, Microsoft Teams Whiteboard, Zoom Whiteboard). If a virtual whiteboard tool is unavailable, a shared slide presentation can be used as a viable alternative (e.g. Google Slides, Microsoft PowerPoint).

Waterfalls are online activities using the chat function in a video conferencing platform (e.g. Zoom, Google Meet, Microsoft Teams). In a waterfall activity, the teacher poses a question and pauses to let students prepare a response. Each student types their response in the chat but does not send it until the teacher gives the signal (usually by saying 'waterfall'). At the signal, all students simultaneously send their responses and the responses flow into the chat window like a waterfall.



Appendix B

Sample Email / School Newsletter Post to Notify Caregivers of the EMHLR



Hi educators! Feel free to adapt this template to your school messaging needs. This is offered as a starting point for you to consider.

On _____ (include date), we are beginning a unit on mental health, using the Elementary Mental Health Literacy Resource (EMHLR). This resource was developed by the mentalhealthliteracy.org team (formerly called teenmentalhealth.org) in collaboration with an advisory group of numerous educators and mental health professionals. The resource builds on the evidence-based *Mental Health & High School Curriculum Guide* which has been extensively researched and implemented in Canada and internationally. The EMHLR was developed in response to the many requests from school partners familiar with *the Guide*, who recognised the importance of introducing mental health literacy concepts to younger students. The Alberta Children’s Hospital Foundation generously provided the funding for this resource to be created.

Here is a link to a short video explaining what is meant by the term ‘mental health literacy’:
<https://youtu.be/I7N14HeNro8> as well as a video explaining the various states of mental health:
<https://youtu.be/VgYmlsYmUIU>

Topics covered in the EMHLR include: *Understanding mental health; The stigma of mental illness; Mental health and the brain; Common mental / neurodevelopmental disorders; Helping self and helping others; and Getting mentally healthy.*

The EMHLR uses short, animated videos with relatable characters to teach the core concepts, along with engaging classroom activities to reinforce the learning.

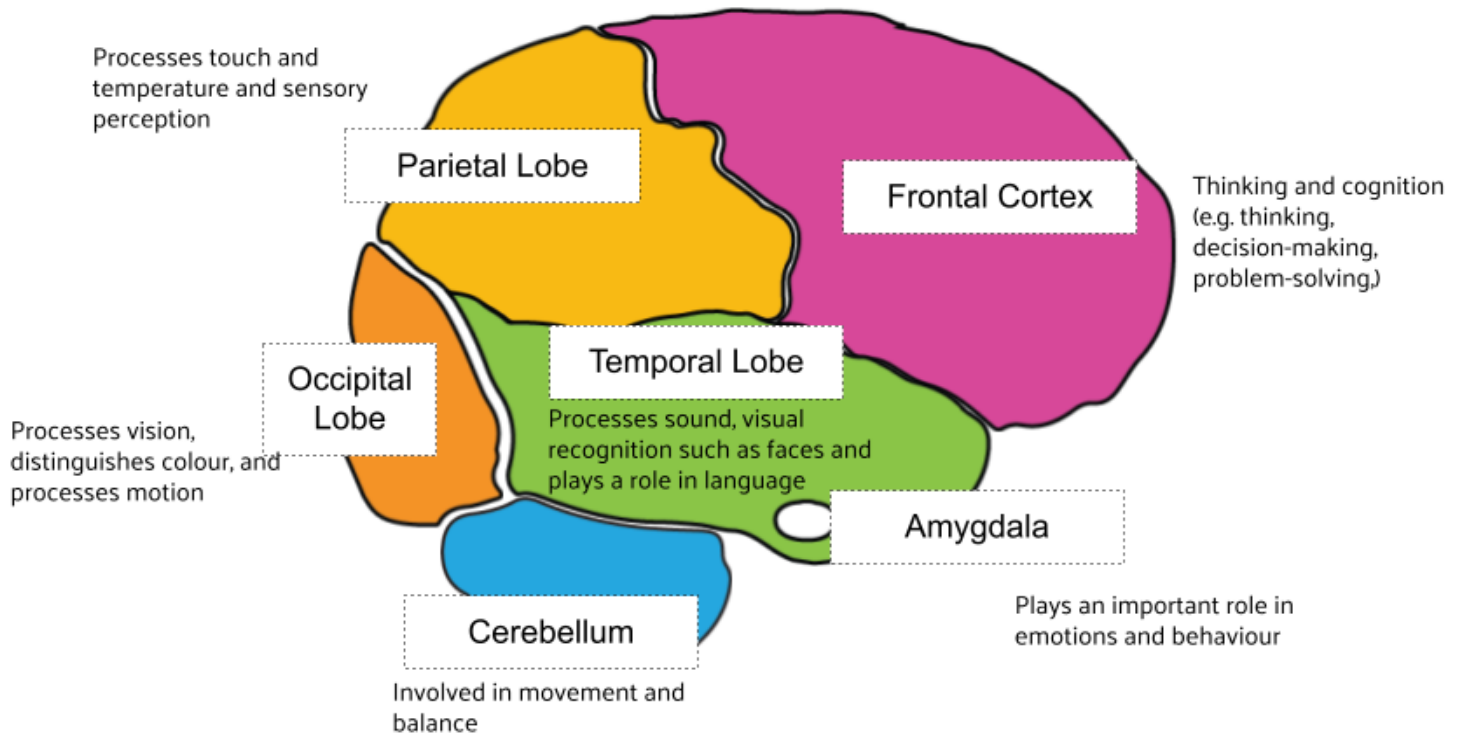
To learn more about the Mental Health Literacy approach, as well as numerous free resources and trusted, evidence-based information for caregivers, please visit the website:
<https://mentalhealthliteracy.org/>

If you have any questions or concerns, or if there is a particular sensitivity around one of the topics that may affect your child’s participation, please let me know.

Sincerely,

Appendix C

Module 3 Brain Puzzle Answer



Appendix D

Module 4 True or False Questions

Anxiety Disorder

1. When we talk about anxiety, we are referring to worry thoughts AND physical symptoms. (e.g. stomach-aches, headaches, difficulty sleeping). **(True)** *Our brain and our body are connected. Anxiety Disorder includes both persistent worry thoughts **and** physical symptoms in the body.*
2. Because I worry about school performance once in a while, I may have Anxiety Disorder. **(False)** *Worrying about things in our daily life is normal because our system is designed to deal with difficult situations. However, if worries are persistent and get in the way of school, work or other areas of functioning, it may be time to talk to a mental health professional.*
3. Our feelings of anxiety are tied to our fight or flight system. **(True)** *This is part of our brain's 'alarm system' to help keep us safe. Our higher thinking (prefrontal cortex) helps turn the alarm off.*
4. People with Generalized Anxiety Disorder (GAD) can control their worries if they really want to. **(False)** *GAD is diagnosed when a person finds it difficult to control worry on more days than not for at least six months and has three or more physical symptoms (e.g. feeling tired, breathing rapidly, increased heart rate, trouble sleeping).*
5. If you have an Anxiety Disorder, it is important to avoid situations that make you feel 'stressed.' **(False)** *Treating yourself as if you are weak and avoiding risks leads to feeling demoralised. Avoiding stressful situations tends to reinforce anxiety over time.*



Specific Learning Disorder

1. It is normal to struggle with reading, writing or math once in a while. **(True)** *Yes, we all struggle with reading, writing or math sometimes.*
2. There are many ways to improve reading, writing or math skills for a child with a Learning Disorder (LD). **(True)** *There are effective ways to help children with Learning Disorders, including: providing extra academic support and applying supportive tools (e.g. visuals) or accommodations (e.g. extra test time, stress reduction techniques).*
3. Children with LD cannot learn. **(False)** *Children with LDs are as smart as everyone else and can learn. LDs mean learning in different ways.*
4. People with LD can have a very successful career in many fields. **(True)** *Yes, if youth with LD are taught effective learning strategies and efficient accommodation use, they can be very successful both in life and at work.*
5. Learning disorders mean difficulty in one or more areas of learning (e.g. math or reading) but not overall intelligence. **(True)** *Learning Disorder is not because of low intelligence or because a person isn't motivated to learn.*

Depression

1. Depression is just feeling sad occasionally. **(False)** *Feeling sad is a normal reaction to a loss, disappointment, problem, or other difficult situation. Depression is a mental illness and it is much more than sadness or low mood.*
2. Depression will go away by itself. **(False)** *Depression does not usually go away on its own. Additional treatment and support may be needed for it to improve.*
3. People with Depression don't enjoy things as they usually do. **(True)** *A common symptom of Depression is losing interest in activities that the person used to find enjoyable, such as extra-curricular activities or spending time with friends.*
4. Depression is caused by sad events. **(False)** *The exact causes of Depression are not entirely clear. However, Depression happens as a result of the interactions between genetics and the environment.*
5. If you think someone is depressed, the best way to help is to try to cheer them up. **(False)** *The important strategy to support someone with Depression is to help get them connected to a mental health professional....and remain a supportive friend!*

Attention-Deficit / Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)

1. A child with ADHD chooses to misbehave. **(False)** *ADHD is a medical brain-based disorder, not a condition of the child's will.*
2. Only boys have ADHD. **(False)** *Boys are more than twice as likely as girls to be diagnosed with ADHD. Part of the reason is that ADHD can look different in boys than in girls, making it a little harder to diagnose in girls. For instance, girls tend to have less trouble with hyperactivity and impulse control than boys do.*
3. Children with ADHD have lots of energy and creativity, can do several things at one time and often volunteer to help others. **(True)** *Yes, children with ADHD have lots of strengths and skills to share!*
4. Children with ADHD are all hyperactive. **(False)** *Not every child with ADHD is hyperactive. There are children with ADHD who may be the quiet ones in class who are often forgetful, distracted, or seem like they are in their own world.*
5. A child who can concentrate on video games / Lego for hours couldn't possibly have ADHD. **(False)** *It is quite common for a child with ADHD to be very distractible in one setting, but highly, highly focused in other settings (usually during preferred activities). ADHD does not mean no capacity for attention. Really, ADHD means dysregulated attention.*

Obsessive Compulsive Disorder (OCD)

1. Everyone has occasional intrusive thoughts and repetitive behaviours. **(True)** *It is absolutely normal; we all have unwanted or unplanned thoughts at times. For example, getting a song stuck in your head!*
2. OCD is a girl disease. **(False)** *According to science, OCD affects girls and boys at the same rate.*
3. OCD is a disorder of both thinking (obsessions) and behaviours (compulsions). Obsessions are repetitive thoughts, urges or images that are intrusive and unwanted. Compulsions are repetitive behaviours used in an effort to reduce the anxiety associated with an obsession. **(True)** *OCD includes both obsessive thoughts and compulsive behaviours. People know these thoughts, urges or images are not real but they struggle to move on from them.*
4. OCD is all about being obsessively tidy and clean. **(False)** *Not really. Although one common obsession is the fear of dirt or germs, there are many other ways that obsessions can show up for people with OCD.*
5. Stress causes OCD. **(False)** *While stressful situations can make the symptoms worse in people with OCD, stress alone does not cause OCD. A combination of genes and the environment cause OCD.*

Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)

1. Children with Autism don't want to make friends. **(False)** *People with ASD can and do have fulfilling relationships with family, friends, partners and children.*
2. Autism characteristics start early and continue throughout life. **(True)** *With proper assessment and diagnosis, it becomes clear that a person with ASD showed symptoms from a young age. People with ASD can be well supported through a variety of treatments.*
3. People with Autism are only good at repetitive tasks. **(False)** *People with ASD have many diverse strengths, talents and skills that can benefit others and the community.*
4. All children with Autism do not do well at school. **(False)** *69% of children with Autism do not have an intellectual disability.*
5. Each person with Autism has unique strengths and challenges. **(True)** *Just like the rest of us, people with ASD have their own unique areas of strength and areas of difficulty.*

Specific Phobia

1. Everyone has some mild irrational fears such as heights, animals or seeing blood. **(True)** *It is ok that we all fear some things in life.*
2. People with phobias are just being silly and should have more courage. **(False)** *Having a phobia has nothing to do with a person's 'strength.' Telling someone who has a specific phobia to 'just calm down' is like telling someone who needs glasses to 'just see better.'*
3. A specific phobia is an intense, irrational fear of something that poses little to no actual danger. **(True)** *The fear or anxiety is much greater than the actual danger, and it lasts a really long time.*
4. If you sometimes fear the dark, monsters, or being left alone, then you have Specific Phobia. **(False)** *A specific phobia causes functional impairment in your life. This means it keeps getting in the way of you doing the things you need to do.*
5. Avoiding your phobia is the best way to deal with it. **(False)** *Avoiding a phobia will make it even worse the next time.*

Appendix E

How to download EMHLR Digital Resources

The EMHLR digital resources (class slide deck, activity sheets and MHL Journal) are hosted on the MHL Team's Google Drive account. Teachers / students can make their own copy to ensure they can access the resources when and where they need them. The EMHLR digital resources can also be accessed and edited with peers in real time, making for a great collaborative digital / in-person class activity.

How to make a copy of Google Slides to access EMHLR digital resources:

1. Sign in to your Google account.
2. Open the Google Slide file links:

- **Classroom Slide Deck:**

<https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1RunErX7DJsVPCSI5ToSvUJ33QyBCvyWYi3I0jWb0pb0/>

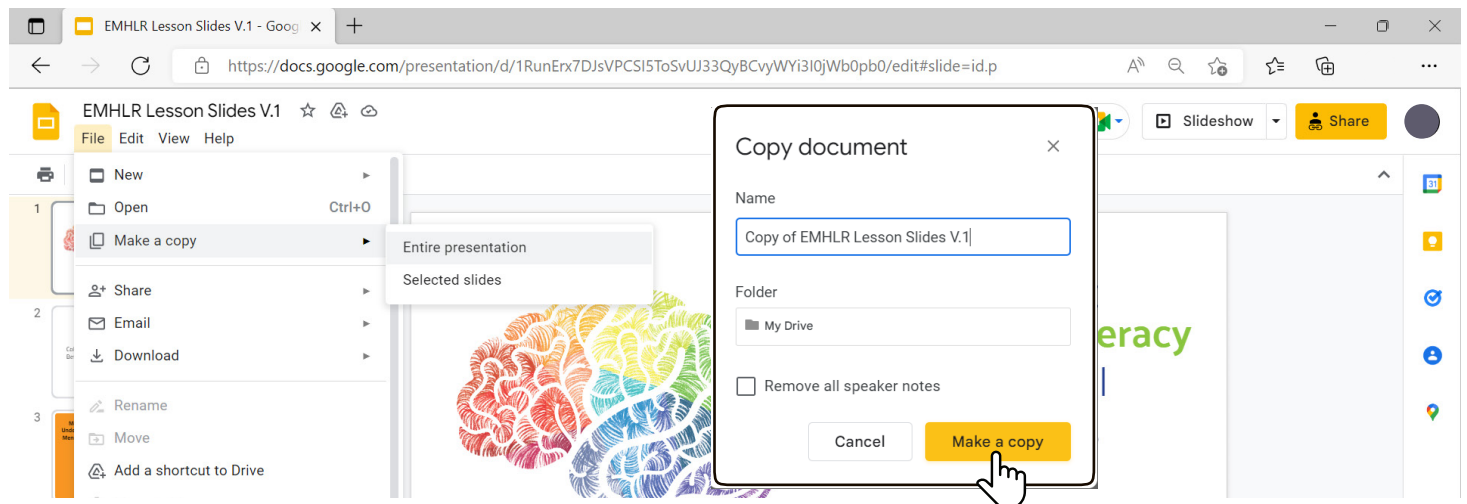
- **Digital Activity Sheets:**

https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1by6pNbmni4bhmUeQbtSs_d3uT2hjPPE47IKs4c6pitY/

- **Digital MHL Journal Sheets:**

<https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1B0q1dizMy-AiYkqhKZ6tKYgUfZ73B7tiuevPFRYCJkk/>

3. Select 'File' > 'Make a copy' > 'Entire presentation'. Under 'Folder', select 'My Drive' (teacher's / student's personal Google Drive) and click 'Make a copy'.



4. Check your Google Drive if you've successfully made copies of the EMHLR digital resources.
5. Teachers / students can then access / complete digital activities in their Google Drive.

The field of mental health is extensive and there is much to learn about the brain, mental illness, treatments and prevention. For more information and support please go to <http://mentalhealthliteracy.org>



© Mental Health Literacy 2022

