

Addressing Mental Health Issues in the Classroom

Participant's handouts

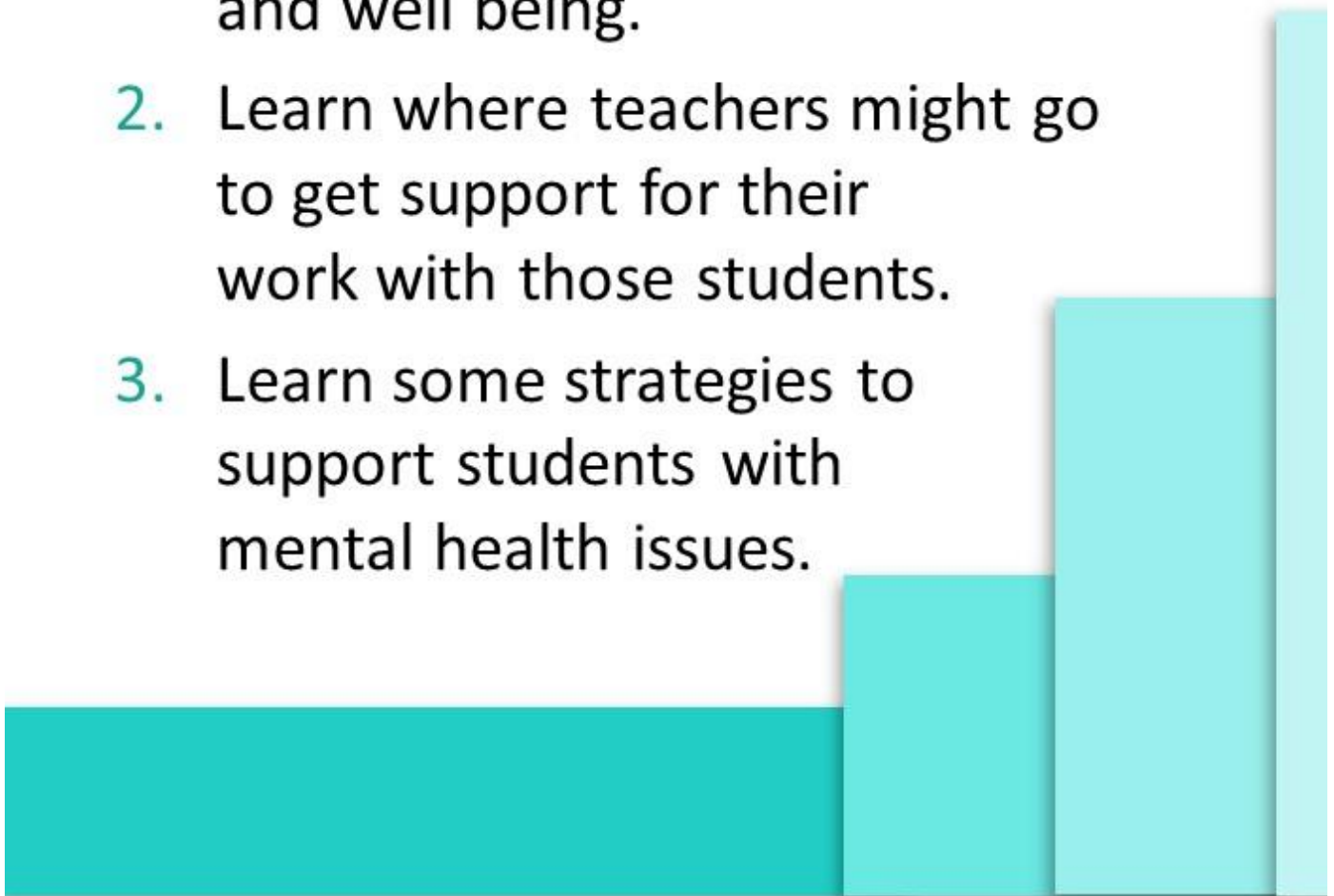


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British Columbia Teachers' Federation
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OBJECTIVES

1. Recognize when their students are having issues with mental health and well being.
2. Learn where teachers might go to get support for their work with those students.
3. Learn some strategies to support students with mental health issues.



Silent Write

Teachers witness youth mental health issues playing out in Canadian classrooms every day. According to the Mental Health Commission of Canada (CMCC), between 15% and 25% of our children and youth suffer from at least one mental health problem or illness. The Commission also notes that 70% of mental illnesses in adults have their onset during adolescence or childhood and 70% of childhood cases of mental health problems can be solved through early diagnosis and interventions. Often, these problems are masked by children and youth for fear of being labeled. As educators, we must help to eliminate the stigma associated with mental health issues in our schools.

Canadian Teachers' Federation (<http://perspectives.ctf-fce.ca/en/article/1950>)

Silent write n°1 Respond to the above statement here:

Silent write n°2

Behaviours	Chronic, Dramatic Change, Repeated
short attention span	
low self-esteem	
insomnia	
feeling of hopelessness	
fatigue	
lack of energy	
over-eating or lack of appetite	
slow moving	
clumsy	
bullying	
distracted	
lethargic	
isolating	
self-harm	
aggression	
leaves without permission	
avoidance	
refusal to do work	
seems sad	
inappropriate language	
excessive tardiness or absences	
chronic physical health issues	

Additional Behaviours	Chronic, Dramatic Change, Repeated

General Indicators

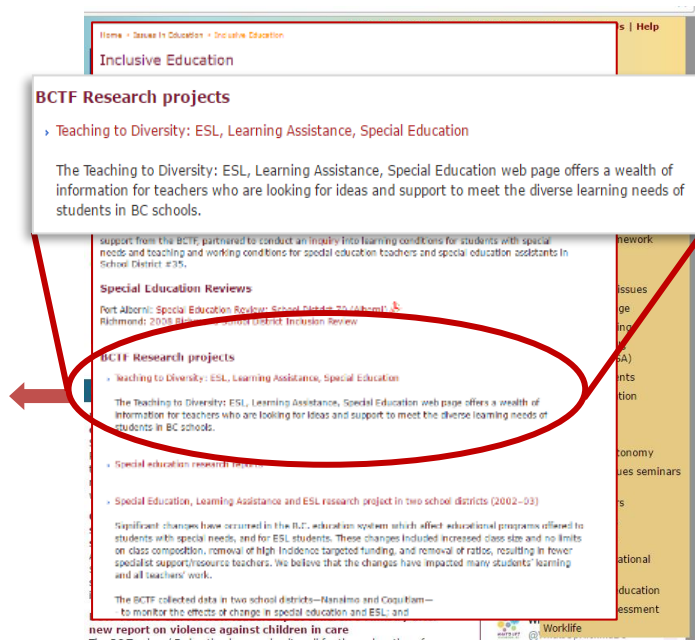
	Trauma	Attachment	Depression	Anxiety	Socio-cultural triggers	Psychiatric
Observations/ situations	child abuse neglect witness violence disrupted attachment violence accidents war natural disasters sudden unexpected loss relocation separation from family	abandonment placement in care forced new relationship unhealthy parents court ordered custodial arrangements death of a caregiver mental health of parent(s)	feeling of hopelessness sadness difficulty concentrating low self-esteem insomnia fatigue, low energy recurring thoughts of death/suicide jumpiness agitation	extreme reaction to change disengagement hair pulling avoidance perfectionism somatic symptoms phobias lack of attendance social avoidance negative (body) self-image co-dependency	racism sexism homophobia poverty homelessness transgender marginalization not accepted contrast home and school behaviour cultural norms	official med plan in place part of team plan

*Note: therapies for certain diagnosed behaviours should be developed by professionals such as doctors, psychiatrists and psychologists.

* Disclosures should be addressed through district protocols.

Reference list

BCTF website is full of resources.



- Helpful Websites for Youth in Understanding Mental Health and Substance Use Issues. Kelty Mental Health Resource Centre: <http://keltymentalhealth.ca/>
- BCTF Website: bctf.ca/uploadedFiles/Public/Issues/InclusiveEd/TeachingToDiversity/ResourceInventory/MentalHealth/Helpful%20Weblinks%20for%20Youth%20QRS%2029-Sept-2011.pdf
- Finding Help: List of contacts and hotlines. Kelty Mental Health Resource Centre. <http://keltymentalhealth.ca/node/2572>
- Healthy Living Toolkits. Kelty Mental Health Resource Centre. <http://keltymentalhealth.ca/toolkits>
- School Connectedness in Action. Healthy Schools BC. <https://healthyschoolsbc.ca/key-focus-areas/school-connectedness>
- School Connectedness Action Guide. Healthy Schools BC. <http://healthyschoolsbc.ca/media/22187/sc-action-guide-final.pdf>

ADHD

- BCTF Teaching to Diversity. bctf.ca/issues/resources.aspx?id=10956#adhd
- “Your Attention, Please”: Improving Access for ADHD Patients. Doctors of BC (formerly BC Medical Association) www.doctorsofbc.ca/sites/default/files/adhd_paper.pdf

Anxiety

- BCTF Teaching to Diversity. bctf.ca/issues/resources.aspx?id=12328#mh
- Friends Program in B.C. Schools. Ministry of Children and Family Development.

www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/health/managing-your-health/mental-health-substance-use/child-teen-mental-health/friends-program

- Anxiety. Kelty Mental Health Resource Centre. keltymentalhealth.ca/mental-health/disorders/anxiety-children-and-youth
- Mindshift app by Anxiety BC, designed to help teens and young adults cope with anxiety. www.anxietybc.com/resources/mindshift-app

Bullying

- WITS Program: Creating responsive communities for the prevention of peer victimization. www.witsprogram.ca

Co-morbidity

- “Co-morbidity and Other Mental Illnesses.” National Institute on Drug Abuse. search.usa.gov/search?utf8=%25E2%259C%2593&affiliate=www.drugabuse.gov&query=comorbidity&commit=Search

Depression

- Depression. BCTF Teaching to Diversity: bctf.ca/issues/resources.aspx?id=10572#D
- Teaching students with mental health disorders: depression. BC Ministry of Education. www.bced.gov.bc.ca/specialed/docs/depression_resource.pdf
- Depression. Kelty Mental Health Resource Centre. keltymentalhealth.ca/mental-health/disorders/depression

Eating Disorders

- Eating Disorders. BCTF Teaching to Diversity. bctf.ca/issues/resources.aspx?id=10572#E
- Teaching students with mental health disorders: eating disorders. BC Ministry of Education www.bced.gov.bc.ca/specialed/edi/welcome.htm
- Being Me: Promoting Positive Body Image Resource. BC Ministry of Education. www.healthyschoolsbc.ca/program/242/being-me-promoting-positive-body-image
 - module for students from kindergarten to Grade 9 to complement Action Schools! BC’s Classroom Healthy Eating Action Resource (CHEAR) while supporting the Ministry of Education’s prescribed learning outcomes across the curriculum.
- Disordered Eating and Obesity. Kelty Mental Health Resource Centre. http://keltymentalhealth.ca/link.php?nid=1233&rurl=/sites/default/files/Disordered_Eating_and_Obesity_Briefing_Document.pdf
- Disordered eating and eating disorders resources for educators. Kelty Mental Health Resource Centre. bctf.ca/uploadedFiles/Public/Publications/ResearchDept/bctf-research/2011-12/Eating%20Disorders%20for%20Educators%20QRS%2029-Sept-2011.pdf

Drug and Alcohol Abuse

- Cycles—Developed by researchers at the UBC School of Nursing, Cycles is a film-based resource that encourages teens to talk openly and honestly about why some young people use cannabis (marijuana). www.uvic.ca/research/centres/carbc/publications/helping-schools/cycles/index.php
- Substance Abuse resources, University of Victoria. www.uvic.ca/research/centres/carbc

Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder

- BC Provincial Outreach for FASD. www.fasdoutreach.ca
- What is FASD? Kelty Mental Health Resource Centre. keltymentalhealth.ca/faq/what-fetal-alcohol-spectrum-disorder-fasd
- FASD. Public Health Agency of Canada. www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/hp-ps/dca-dea/prog-ini/fasd-etcaf/index-eng.php

Mental Health

- *Mental health*. BCTF Teaching to Diversity. bctf.ca/issues/resources.aspx?id=12328#mh
- Booster Buddy—a mobile application, developed by Vancouver Island Health Authority, designed to help teens and young adults improve their mental health. www.viha.ca/cyf_mental_health/boosterbuddy
- Healthy Minds Canada Foundation: When something's wrong: Ideas for teachers. <https://www.jack.org/>
- Here To Help Self-Help Resources. www.heretohelp.bc.ca/self-help-resources
- Welcome to The ABCs of Mental Health—A Teacher Resource. Hincks-Dellcrest Centre, Toronto. www.hincksdellcrest.org/ABC/Welcome
- Available for teachers and parents from the Hincks-Dellcrest Centre. www.hincksdellcrest.org
- ABCs of Mental Health. www.hincksdellcrest.org/ABC/Welcome
- Children and Youth Mental health resources overview. Kelty Mental Health Resource Centre. bctf.ca/uploadedFiles/Public/Issues/InclusiveEd/TeachingToDiversity/ResourceInventory/MentalHealth/Children%20Youth%20Mental%20Health%20QRS%2022-Sept-2011.pdf
- Making the Right Connections: Promoting positive mental health among BC youth. McCreary Centre report (May 2011). www.mcs.bc.ca/pdf/making_the_right_connections.pdf. Also see – Youth Action Grants. www.mcs.bc.ca/ahs_youth_resources
- Mental Health: Classroom Strategies and Case Studies. bctf.ca/issues/resources.aspx?id=24077.
- Kelty Mental Health Summer Institute 2014. <http://keltymentalhealth.ca/SummerInstitute2014>
Youth and Young Adults — Life in Transition/ Public Health Agency of Canada: The Chief Public Health Officer's Report on the State of Public Health in Canada, 2011. www.canada.ca/en/public-health/corporate/publications/chief-public-health-officer-reports-state-public-health-canada/chief-public-health-officer-report-on-state-public-health-canada-2011.html
- *The health of Canada's young people: A mental health focus*. Public Health Agency of Canada: bctf.ca/uploadedFiles/Public/Issues/InclusiveEd/TeachingToDiversity/ResourceInventory/MentalHealth/The%20Health%20of%20Canada's%20Young%20People_A%20MH%20Focus_2012.pdf
- Starling Minds—a Cognitive Behaviour Programme. www.starlingminds.com
- Teach BC: Stop Wondering, Start Knowing: A Mental Health School Video Resource. teachbcdb.bctf.ca/permalink/resource237
- Youth Mental Health BC – a survey of students in Grades 7 to 12. www.mcs.bc.ca/pdf/AHSV_mental_health_poster.pdf

Teen Suicide

- Myths and facts of self-harm and suicide: webcast, Summer Institute (2010) and Non-suicidal

- deliberate self injury: a presentation, Summer Institute (2010)
<http://mediasite.phsa.ca/Mediasite/Play/c5f8be33047a47768c0e83bfd76271e21d>
- Globe and Mail article on teenager's suicide (November 16, 2010).
www.theglobeandmail.com/life/health-and-fitness/health/conditions/nhl-family-shares-tragedy-of-teen-daughters-suicide/article595292/
 - Strengthening the safety net: A report on the Suicide Prevention, Intervention and Postvention (PIP) Initiative for BC. <https://suicidepipinitiative.files.wordpress.com/2009/05/suicide-pip-initiative-full-report.pdf>
 - Gay-Straight alliances in schools reduce suicide risk for all students—a UBC media release, based on research findings. <http://news.ubc.ca/2014/01/20/gay-straight-alliances-in-schools-reduce-suicide-risk-for-all-students/>

Links to organization and resource sites in British Columbia

- BC Healthy Schools Network Newsletter. www.healthyschoolsbc.ca/program/242/being-me-promoting-positive-body-image
- BC Mental Health and Substance Use Services. www.bcmhsus.ca
- BC FRIENDS program, Ministry of Children and Family Development.
<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/health/managing-your-health/mental-health-substance-use/child-teen-mental-health/friends-program?keyword=friends>
- BCTF 'Teaching to Diversity' web page: Mental health resources.
bctf.ca/issues/resources.aspx?id=12328#mh
- Centre for Addictions Research of BC. <https://www.uvic.ca/research/centres/cisur/>
- The F.O.R.C.E Society for kids' mental health. www.familysmart.ca/?r=true%2F
- The Health Aboriginal Network. <https://thehealthyaboriginal.net>
- Here to Help (self-tests and other materials are available here).
www.heretohelp.bc.ca/visions/schools-vol5/student-mental-health
- Kelty Centre. <http://keltymentalhealth.ca>
- McCreary Centre. www.mcs.bc.ca
- Ministry of Education: Mental Health. www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/education-training/administration/kindergarten-to-grade-12/school-health

Note: The Kelty Centre links and the MoE resource under Depression are particularly useful resources for most classroom teachers

Disclaimer: The creators of this guide are not experts or professionals in mental health. Information and links provided in this guide are meant to serve as examples and suggestions, not as a substitute for the advice of an appropriate health care professional. The services of a competent and qualified professional, such as a physician or mental health professional, should be sought if professional advice is required.

Scenarios

Using one of the following scenarios, how would you handle the student in the scenario without exacerbating the mental health issue?

1. Boris is a refugee who had escaped the atrocities of the war in Chechnya. During his family's escape, they found themselves in an active war zone. His father hid him behind a barrel and to draw the fire away from Boris, ran across the road exposing himself to the gunfire. The father survived but Boris, at that moment, felt his father was abandoning him. Boris now exhibits aggressive behaviours when triggered. A trigger may be discipline from an authority figure.

How might you best approach working with Boris?

2. You're an English teacher and you have given your students a creative writing assignment from 200–300 words. One of your students writes the following poem and hands it in as her assignment.

Fear, pain, loss
masks of happiness.
Bullies; biting it back
fresh cuts, old scars.
Screams, silently swallowed
inner darkness.|

What do you do with this?

3. A Grade 1 student likes to go to the dress up box during free time. He often puts on the traditionally female costumes, happily wearing princess dresses and tiaras. Some of the other children started to tease him and call him names and homophobic slurs. You notice the child withdrawing into himself in the class.

What should you do?

4. Kevin is currently living in a 3rd foster home in BC. He has trouble focussing on his school work and doesn't engage in school activities. When he does do any work the subject is about his family and the town they live in. Kevin often talks about how he doesn't feel he belongs here in BC. There's no one who he can connect to as he feels there is no one from his nation in this province.

How might you best work with Kevin?

5. Dayton refuses to go to school and when he is there he chooses to be selectively mute and finds ways to leave both the classroom and the school. Dayton has not handed in any assignments this term and when he does show up, he doesn't respond to you when you ask about his homework. The parents have called you saying they drop him off every morning and don't understand why he is failing your course.

What should you do?

6. Sara's attendance has been erratic this year. Previously an honour roll student, she is now withdrawn and her academic performance is rapidly declining. The friends she used to hang out with complain that she never wants to be with them anymore. One day a student who is her closest friend brings a picture in of Sara posted on Instagram. The picture shows several slash marks across the inside of her arm. Sara has been cutting herself and posted the pictures. Her friend tells you Sara hates her counsellor and refuses to see him.

What should you do?

7. Rasheed comes to your class door daily but doesn't come in many days. You see him at the door but when you look at the students in their seats, he's often not among them. When he does come in and sits down, you notice that he is often shaking, breathing erratically or with his head covered and down. You have heard him say under his breath, "I can't be here, I can't be here". When he gets up and leaves you find him sitting in a corner somewhere quiet in the school.

What can you do to help Rasheed?

Actions to support students

<p>Physical environment e.g., is a welcoming and safe place</p>	<p>Curriculum e.g., assignments tailored to student's needs or interests</p>
<p>School staff e.g., demonstrating unconditional acceptance of students, not necessarily their behaviour.</p>	<p>Learner e.g., learning how to be more in control of their world.</p>

Creating Your Own Inquiry

My inquiry: What is my question?

Who might I work with to find answers to my question?

What resources do I need to help answer my question?

When/where would I find the time and support to help me answer my question?

Reference: bctf.ca/TeacherInquiry

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