

Pathways to Health Brainstorm

Goals

- To offer practical examples of people, activities and resources that can help youth navigate through a challenging time.
- To offer an opportunity for youth to personalize information on coping and resources.

Senior 1-4 Education Curriculum Connections

This activity contributes to the following Student Specific Learning Outcomes:

Family Studies

- *S1 5.1.3 Identify behaviours that promote health and wellness.*
- *S1 5.1.5 Examine how decisions affect one's well-being.*
- *S3 4.4.4 Demonstrate appropriate stress management/problem-solving techniques.*

Guidance Education GLOs under Personal/Social Component.

Physical Education

- *K.3.5.B.4 Identify available community supports that promote safety and community health.*
- *K.4.S2.A.1 Assess personal attributes and talents across a variety of domains, and assess how each contributes to self-esteem/self-confidence.*
- *K.4.S2.C.4a Examine the stress management strategies and defense mechanisms that can be healthy or unhealthy ways of managing stress.*
- *K.4.S2.C.1a Describe the behaviours necessary for providing others with support and promoting emotional health and well-being.*
- *K.4.S2.C.4a Examine the stress management strategies and defense mechanisms that can be healthy or unhealthy ways of managing stress.*
- *K.5.S2.A.2 Demonstrate knowledge of healthy lifestyle practices that contribute to disease/illness prevention, including mental illness/disorders.*
- *11.MH.1 Identify and apply positive health strategies to deal with issues such as stress, anxiety, depression, and eating disorders.*
- *11.MH.5 Identify community service agencies that support individuals concerned about mental-emotional health issues.*

Have Ready

- Write: “Who can I talk to?” “What do I like to do?” and “What do I like about myself?” on a third of a flipchart
- Pathways to Health handout (see below)
- Markers

Instructions

- It can be difficult to think of things that you like about yourself, things you like to do or even who you can talk to when going through a tough time. That is why we make a list of people, places, and things we enjoy that might help us during a hard time.
- Ask youth, **“Who can I talk to?” “What do I like to do?” and “What do I like about myself?”** and write their responses to each question on a flipchart. Have the group answer the questions as a large group first while you flipchart their answers. Note: This can be done as a large or small group brainstorms. This can also be done by posting the three flipcharts and having groups of youth rotate through each flipchart adding their answers.

Sample Flipchart

Who Can I Talk To?

- Friends
- Family members
- Teachers
- Elders
- Pets or animals
- Guidance counsellor
- Support workers
- Medicine people
- Spiritual people like Traditional Healer or Pastor
- Parole Officer
- Klinik Crisis Line: 1.800.322.3019
- Manitoba Suicide Prevention & Support Line: 1.877.435.7170
- Kids Help Phone: 1.800.668.6868
- Sexual Assault Crisis Line 1.888.292.7565
- Kids Text Line: text *connect* to 686868
- First Nations and Inuit Hope for Wellness Help Line: 1.855.242.3310
- Manitoba Farm, Rural & Northern Support Line: 1.866.367.3276 (Chat Support Line too.)

- If in Winnipeg, Klinik Drop-In Counseling (870 Portage, Winnipeg), Youth Mobile Crisis Unit: 204.949.4777

Debriefing “Who can I talk to?”

- Validate that we all need to feel supported and listened to especially when things are tough.
- Ask youth, “**What could you say you if you called a helpline?**” **Validate any responses and explain that the people on the lines are trained counsellors who are there to listen and try to help.** Assure youth the counsellors will not hang-up on anyone for not talking right away or not knowing what to say. They know that calling a helpline takes a lot of courage, and they will wait with you until you find the words.
- Provide each youth with a resource page of all the website and helpline numbers. See the resources handout on the Teen Talk website.
- If it makes sense to do so, provide some information about each resource specifically those that are youth friendly and local or ones that operate 24/7 like the crisis lines. For example, youth can access programs at the Child Adolescent Mental Health Program (free) through referral by a teacher, counsellor, or self-refer.

Sample Flipchart

What Do I Like To Do?

- Hang out with friends
- Call people I know
- Be outside
- Play video games
- Talk to people/have conversations
- Play or listen to music
- Watch movies
- Play sports, dance, sing, ride bike, drum
- Read poetry or create your own
- Go shopping
- Build or fix something

- Masturbate or have sexy time
- Meditate and pray
- Smudging
- Spend time with Elders
- Cultural practices such as going to ceremonies
- Spend time with family

Debriefing “What do I like to do?”

- Validate their responses and highlight that the things we enjoy doing can also lift our spirits and help us when we are feeling down.
- If we look into cultural practices, we can often find knowledge, activities and ceremonies that promote mental wellness and deal with stress. One Indigenous cultural and spiritual practice that is from this Land is smudging. Smudging includes burning medicines like sage, cedar and sweet grass, to cleanse and heal. Smudging can be used to help someone de-stress, get through a hard time or to maintain mental wellness. People may also smudge to connect to their spirituality. Smudging can also be part of reclaiming Indigenous identity, culture and power.
- If youth have substances use on their lists, we have to acknowledge that substance use or self-medicating is a choice some people make. Substance use is not necessarily a problem for everyone and it can potentially lead to problems in the long run like addictions. **It’s important to know that substances and self-medicating can numb all feelings, both “negative” (i.e., shame, guilt) and “positive” (i.e., joy, hope).** See the Substance Use Awareness chapter for games and activities on substance use.
- FYI: If youth bring up self-harm, note that if we are self-harming one of the most important things we can do is try and add in healthier ways of coping. Finding new ways to get through difficult times can help people reduce risks and may be more useful in the long run.
- Tell youth, **“Some ways of coping allow us to reflect and/or release our feelings** (e.g. talking, journaling, making music, art), **and others help us to distract, numb, or avoid feelings** (e.g. shopping, watching television, playing sports, etc.).” Ideally, we do

reflective and engaging as well as distancing or distracting activities when dealing with difficult or stressful times.

- It is helpful to have a variety of coping skills. It can be good to think about activities that you can do by yourself, that you can do with other people, activities that are free and some that cost money, activities that are quick, and other that take some time, things that take effort and things that are easy. That way, we have a mix of things to pull from.³

Sample Flipchart

What Do I Like About Myself?

- Funny
- Kind/Good friend
- Helpful
- Smart
- Good listener
- Good gamer
- Sporty
- Excellent T.V. watcher etc.. and more.

“What do I like about Myself?” Debrief

- We have found that often times youth say nothing or say that they don't know. It can be good to think about some things that are connected to our personalities and our skills. Ask youth, **“Is it OK to like ourselves?”** (Yes!) Sometimes we might be worried others will call us conceited or say we are full of ourselves but each person is special and has great talents. Confidence is good to have.
- We are supposed to like ourselves. It is important to know and explore the good things inside us in order for us to take care of ourselves and get to a place of mental wellness. Plus, when we show that we like who we are and believe in ourselves, it gives others' permission to feel good about themselves too.
- Have youth fill out their own copy of the Pathways to Health handout to keep it handy for whenever they need it.

³Notes from Dr. Laurence Katz presentation, May 2016.

Pathways to Health

People I can talk to:



Things I like to do:



Things I like about myself:



Pathways to Health

People I can talk to:



Things I like to do:



Things I like about myself:

