

Pathways to Health Brainstorm

Recommended Age: 12+

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.

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 large or small group brainstorm. 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)
- Teen clinics – scattered across Winnipeg and Manitoba. Most offer free drop-in youth counselling one evening a week. Find one at teenclinic.ca.
- If in Winnipeg, Klinik Drop-In Counselling (167 Sherbrook St., Winnipeg), Youth Mobile Crisis Unit: 204.949.4777
- If in Brandon, Child & Adolescent Treatment Centre (CATC): 204.578.2700 or toll-free: 1.866.403.5459

‘Who can I talk to?’ Debrief

- Validate that we all need to feel supported and listened to, especially when things are tough.
- Ask youth, **“What could you say 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 websites 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-referral.

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

‘What do I like to do?’ Debrief

- 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 help deal with stress. One Indigenous cultural and spiritual practice that is from this Land is smudging. Smudging includes burning medicines like sage, cedar, and sweetgrass to cleanse and heal. Smudging can be used to help someone de-stress, get through a hard time, or maintain mental wellness. People may also smudge to connect to their spirituality. Smudging can be part of reclaiming Indigenous identity, culture, and power.
- If youth have substance use on their lists, we must acknowledge that substance use or self-medicating is a choice some people make. Discuss key harm reduction tips like drinking water, taking breaks, being somewhere safe, etc. Avoid shaming the group, but also acknowledge it can potentially lead to problems like addiction. **It's important to know that substances and self-medicating can numb all feelings, both 'negative' (e.g., shame, guilt) and 'positive' (e.g., 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, that are free, that cost money, that are quick, that take some time, that take effort, and that are easy. That way, we have a mix of things to pull from.ⁱ

Sample Flipchart

What Do I Like About Myself?

- Funny
- Kind
- Good friend
- Helpful
- Smart
- Awesome chef
- Good listener
- Good gamer
- Great fisher/hunter
- Sporty
- Excellent TV watcher

‘What do I like about myself?’ Debrief

- We have found that often youth say ‘nothing’ or say that they don’t know. It can be good to think about some things that connect 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 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.

PATHWAYS TO HEALTH

Three people I can talk to

(you can put phone lines too)

1.

2.

3

Three things I like about myself

(e.g. my jokes, my smile, my skills)

1.

2.

3.

Three things I like to do

(e.g. cooking, video games, hanging with friends)

1.

2.

3



Keep this somewhere special and look at it if you are having a hard time.
It might brighten your day!

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