

**Special Topics in PHE: Resource Package**  
**Monitoring and Maintaining Mental Well-being**

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For Dan Geneau

Caring for Kids (2017). *Your Child's Mental Health*. Retrieved from [https://www.caringforkids.cps.ca/handouts/mentalhealth/mental\\_health](https://www.caringforkids.cps.ca/handouts/mentalhealth/mental_health)

This is a really great resource for both teachers and parents. It begins by giving some examples of how to nurture a child's mental health. For example, it suggests to help children build strong, caring relationships, with family, friends, or someone who is in that child's life a lot (i.e a teacher). It also goes into depth about how common mental health problems are amongst children and youth, giving the reader a sense of just how prominent it is in kids. The article then gives some clues as to what to look for in children and youth who experience mental health issues, such as changes in behaviour or physical changes. Finally, the article gives plenty of additional resources and help lines for where to go for help if you are unsure what to do. Articles like these are great for helping us define how mental health problems can look in kids. As teachers, this resource could be used as a sort of checklist when we are worried about a student. We can reflect back to this article, and see if we notice any changes in the child, and notify the principal and then the parents. As teachers, we are often with a child for a large percentage of their lives throughout the week. We are able to get a good sense of their behaviour and thoughts that their parents might not necessarily witness at home.

Headspace (2021). *For Friends & Family*. Retrieved from <https://headspace.org.au/friends-and-family/mental-health/>

Headspace is a great resource geared towards family and friends. When you open up the link and scroll down, there are five different categories for you to choose from: Life Issues, Health & Wellbeing, Mental Health, Alcohol & Other Drugs and Work & Study. Each section gives you further subsections to select. For example, if you click on "Health & Wellbeing", there are various specific topics which take you to an article about that topic. In the wellbeing section, we can select from "understanding young people", "providing support", "promoting wellbeing" and "gaming". Each article gives you some information about that topic, and ways in which you can support someone struggling with that topic. We can start to understand what mental health and wellbeing looks like, and different tools we can use to support growth in these areas. Teachers are able to use this resource, and it is also something great that we can pass on to families. For example, if we suspect that one of our students has an eating disorder, then this resource can help us to determine the symptoms, as well as to understand it more clearly. The site is very easy to navigate, and provides some great articles that are quick and easy to read and understand.

Bluteau, J., (2017). How can we best support student mental well-being? *EdCan Network*. Retrieved from <https://www.edcan.ca/articles/the-facts-on-education-how-can-we-best-support-student-mental-well-being/>

This article focuses on how we as teachers can support a student's mental well-being. It is a short article, but Bluteau mentions some important things. He suggests that educators

should promote the following factors to strengthen students' coping skills: positive self-esteem, healthy lifestyles (good exercise, nutrition and sleep habits), harmonious family relations, a supportive school environment that is conducive to learning, and positive student-teacher relationships. Bluteau then goes on to suggest some strategies and steps to help students accomplish some challenging goals, to further develop their sense of self-efficacy. This includes getting them to identify their feelings and the root of their stress, determining what changes need to be made, proposing strategies to cope or adapt, and monitoring any improvements. This article is great for referring back to, as the steps the author provides are very useful and easy to follow. These suggestions are tools that we can take into our classrooms, and have at the ready when a student is experiencing or encountering a difficult situation surrounding their mental wellbeing.

Deighton, J., Lereya, S. T., Morgan, E., Breedvelt, J., Martin, K., Feltham, A., . . . Robson, C. (n.d.). *Measuring and monitoring children and young people's mental wellbeing: A toolkit for schools and colleges* [PDF file] Retrieved from <https://www.annafreud.org/media/11456/mwb-toolki-final-draft-4.pdf>

This resource is a toolkit to make educators aware of the range of validated instruments that are available to measure and monitor mental wellbeing in students. The first section focuses on defining mental wellbeing, purposes for why schools should measure mental wellbeing, and implementation strategies. Mental wellbeing encompasses social, emotional, and physical wellness, and is defined in this source as “children and young people's happiness, life satisfaction and positive functioning”(p. 6) The purposes of measuring mental wellbeing are broken up into the ideas of snapshot, identification, and evaluation. The resource goes into detail about each individual purpose. The second section has some practice examples from schools who have used the tools recommended. These case studies allow for the reader to get a sense of what these practices look like in action. The third section provides practical advice for bringing wellbeing instruments into the classroom. It explains the importance of introducing measures correctly and answers questions of “why” and “how”. The fourth section contained a compendium of validated resources that can be used to help determine students' subjective mental wellbeing. There are various measures provided as well as information of how they work and how to get them. The range of resources allows for educators to pick an option best suited to the needs of their students. The end of this resources provides many other sources to support mental wellbeing as well as a glossary. Overall this is a fantastic resource for educators as it does a great job of explaining what mental wellbeing is, it's importance, as well as numerous ways to measure it in students.

Pelletiere, N. (2019, April 4). *Clever teacher's mental health check-in chart inspires educators to create their own*. Good Morning America. Retrieved from <https://www.goodmorningamerica.com/wellness/story/teacher-created-mental-health-check-chart-students-now-62169283>

This article highlights a strategy to bring mental health into the classroom. Erin Castillo created a mental health check-in chart to allow students the opportunity to share how they are feeling. The students grab a post-it note, write their names on the back (to keep privacy), and place it on the chart next to the way they are feeling. On Castillo's chart, she includes the feelings "I'm great", "I'm okay", "I'm meh", "I'm struggling", "I'm having a hard time and wouldn't mind a check in", and "I'm in a really dark place right now". If students place notes on one of the last two, this merits a check-in with the teacher and a possible discussion with a school counselor. This is a great idea to quickly check in with your students and give them the opportunity to reflect how they are feeling and reach out for help.

*6 Ways to Embed Mental Wellness into Classroom Culture for High School Students.* EVERFI. (2019, July 31). Retrieved from <https://everfi.com/blog/k-12/6-ways-to-embed-mental-wellness-into-classroom-culture-for-high-school-students/>

This resource provides six activities to help implement mental health awareness in students, as well as what skill the activity helps build. The first activity is to have dialogue about mental health. This is done by asking students questions about what mental health is and bringing awareness to the topic. This focuses on building the skills of communication and empathy. The second activity is providing "brain breaks", allowing students a moment to be mindful and destress, which focuses on the skill of stress management. The next activity focuses on reducing stigma by creating mental health posters that can be put around the classroom, building skills of creativity and writing. Mental health check-ins allow students to see they are not alone and builds on the skill of communication. The fifth activity is a mood tracker, allowing students to personalize their own chart and fill it out throughout the year. This creates awareness in students and builds on the skill of stress management. The final activity suggested is creating positive post-it notes and displaying them somewhere around the school. This allows students to take action and create awareness, as well as build on empathy and writing skills. All of these suggestions are simple and easy ways to embed mental wellness into the classroom.

Child & Youth Health Network of the Capital Region (2016, May 27). *Mental health literacy: Free online resources for educators.* School District #61. Retrieved from <https://healthyschools.sd61.bc.ca/wp-content/uploads/sites/92/2017/04/Mental-Wellness-Resources-for-Educators.pdf>

The Child & Youth Network of the Capital Region worked alongside the Vancouver Island Health Authority to compile and produce this extensive list of resources to support student learning around mental health literacy. The list includes resources for kindergarten to grade 12 classrooms which connect to various aspects of the PHE curriculum. The iMinds resource provides curriculum-linked material aimed at the grade 4-12 classroom, primarily focusing on substance abuse. While the Heart-Mind Online resource provides an array of strategies to support social-emotional learning. Whether the focus is mental health and well-being in

kindergarten, or in grade 12, this document has a resource to help with your lesson planning needs.

*The everyday mental health classroom resource.* School Mental Health Ontario.

Retrieved from <https://smho-smsso.ca/emhc/>

School Mental Health Ontario partnered with the Elementary Teacher's Foundation of Ontario to produce this website which offers a variety of mental health classroom resources. The resources are divided into six skill categories: Stress Management and Coping, Identification and Management of Emotions, Positive Motivation and Perseverance, Healthy Relationship Skills, Self-Awareness and Sense of Identity, and Critical and Creative Thinking. They have also included a search bar so you can search through all categories and locate exactly what is needed. Thought and care was put into developing this site with teachers in mind. Each activity indicates its suitable age group (primary, junior, intermediate) in addition to being broken down further to include timing, materials, instructions, adaptations, and evidence. A quick and simple resource to find ways of incorporating mental well-being in the classroom.

British Columbia Ministry of Education (n.d.). *Physical health and education K-9.* BC Curriculum. Retrieved from

[https://curriculum.gov.bc.ca/sites/curriculum.gov.bc.ca/files/curriculum/physical-health-education/en\\_physical-health-education\\_k-9\\_elab.pdf](https://curriculum.gov.bc.ca/sites/curriculum.gov.bc.ca/files/curriculum/physical-health-education/en_physical-health-education_k-9_elab.pdf)

This document elaborates on all the curriculum connections for British Columbia's K-9 physical health and education curriculum. Mental well-being is one of the components of the Curricular Competencies. First appearing in kindergarten, the mental well-being competencies include identifying feelings, interests, and practices that promote well-being (what makes you feel good about yourself). Mental well-being reoccurs in each grade level following kindergarten. In grade 5, the mental well-being competencies have proceeded to build off the competencies first appearing in kindergarten, but now also include strategies pertaining to substance abuse, puberty, and personal identity. Once reaching grade 9, the mental well-being competencies have deepened the exploration into the key points mentioned in grade 5 (puberty, substance abuse, identity), and now include identifying resources on the subjects and how adolescence influences relationships with others. When considering concepts and competencies to include in PHE lessons, the BC Curriculum is the first resource to refer to when starting the planning process.

Kids Help Phone's Wheel of Well-Being. (2020, September 09). Retrieved from <https://kidshelpphone.ca/get-info/kids-help-phones-wheel-of-well-being/?fbclid=IwAR2kD-swrW991uuf-RaJ6lhkoLtjDsVEeT47AbJtGbdwldvchHBW8unWHhxY>

Kids Help Phone is an excellent resource for children to have. This specific resource focuses on the different aspects that can affect children's mental wellness. Provided on the page is a PDF depicting a "Wheel of Well-Being" that highlights the different influences that could affect someone's well-being. They also make a point to add that mental wellness looks different to

each person and that some influences may be greater than others. Along with the wheel that children are encouraged to print and fill out is a document going into depth about each category, as well as questions you can think about to help fill out the wheel. The seven categories are relationships, emotions, physical health, creativity and thinking, spirituality, school and work, and environment. This is an incredible resource to help children create their own definition of mental well-being and figure out what is most important to them personally. The organization Kids Help Phone is a fantastic resource to give to students and get activities and resources from.