

Let's Talk

Finding Reliable Mental Health Information and Resources

GRADES 7-8



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Program Overview

Welcome to the *Let's Talk: Finding Reliable Mental Health Information and Resources* program for students in Grades 7–8. This program was developed in partnership with MediaSmarts and Kids Help Phone, and was made possible with funding from Bell.

The goal of the *Let's Talk* program is to help young people recognize, locate and evaluate trustworthy mental health information and resources and to increase their general knowledge about mental health and mental illnesses.

Despite the fact that roughly one in six young people has a mental health challenge severe enough to cause them significant distress and to negatively affect how they function at home, at school, with friends or in the community, many youth do not seek help because they are not sure where to find good information and support.

Student outcomes for *Let's Talk* include:

- displaying authoritative information about mental illnesses to challenge common misconceptions about them and raise awareness about stigma;
- learning skills to locate and evaluate reliable information about mental health on the Internet to help increase students' personal awareness about mental health; and,
- demonstrating increased awareness of mental health services and supports within their communities by displaying this information on an infographic.

The comprehensive teacher training components of the *Let's Talk* program have been designed to help teachers discuss mental health in their classrooms in a way that ensures the psychological and emotional safety of their students. The *Teacher Training Guide* and *Teacher Training Presentation* are available at http://mediasmarts.ca/lets_talk_pilot.

We welcome hearing about your experiences introducing these materials into your classroom and we thank you for joining with us in helping young people acquire the skills to support their positive mental health.

LESSON PLANS

Setting the Record Straight: Public Service Announcements on Mental Health



Duration: 2–3 hours

Overview

This lesson starts with a slideshow featuring both commercial advertising and public service announcements (PSAs) to help students learn the differences and similarities between the two. After the class has come to an understanding of the purpose and definition of public service announcements, they study several examples in order to identify the elements that contribute to a successful public service campaign.

Once this is done, students will apply what they've learned by creating public service announcements aimed at correcting misperceptions about mental illnesses. To prepare for this, teachers will lead students through guided discussion on some of the common stereotypes associated with mental illnesses to help them develop a more accurate understanding of the nature of mental illnesses and the origins of these stereotypes, including media portrayals. The teacher leads the class in considering some of the effects of these stereotypes such as stigma and patronization towards people with mental illnesses.

Finally, groups of students draw on their understanding of the elements of successful public service campaigns and their newfound knowledge of mental illnesses to produce a plan for a public service announcement (done either in print or video) aimed at correcting common misperceptions of mental illnesses.

Learning Outcomes

Students will:

- Identify similarities and differences between commercial advertising and public service announcements
- Identify the elements of a successful public service announcement or campaign
- Identify and correct common misperceptions of mental illnesses and their negative effects
- Create a public service announcement on a mental health topic

Preparation and Materials

To prepare for this lesson, please ensure you:

- Read the *Let's Talk: Finding Reliable Mental Health Information and Resources Teacher Training Guide* [http://mediasmarts.ca/sites/default/files/pdfs/Lets_Talk_Teacher_Training_Guide.pdf]
- Review the *Let's Talk: Finding Reliable Mental Health Information and Resources Teacher Training Presentation* [<http://mediasmarts.ca/sites/default/files/tutorials/teacher-training-presentation/index.html>]
- Review the *Let's Talk About Mental Health* student presentation [http://mediasmarts.ca/sites/default/files/Lets_Talk_Student_Presentation.zip]

For the lesson:

Prescreen and load to a computer or digital whiteboard the following videos or alternatives you have chosen (see under "Procedure" below):

- **E-I-E-I-O:** <http://www.thedigitalage.com/gallery/Lightlife-E-I-E-I-O/5183051>
- **House Hippo:** http://www.cca-kids.ca/psas/media_literacy.html or <http://vimeo.com/3947135> (full-screen is available only at the second link)
- **5 Gallons:** <http://vimeo.com/25108291>
- **Evolution:** <http://www.dove.ca/en/Tips-Topics-And-Tools/Videos/Evolution.aspx>
- **Let's Call Bulls#!t:** http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jcWI2Fc_zhQ&feature=plcp (Note: Although there is no inappropriate language in the video, the title may cause some reaction among students. You can discuss with them why the makers of this PSA might have used (implied) profanity as part of their campaign (possible answers include: to get viewers' attention, to seem more relevant to young viewers, to communicate the seriousness of the message.) Students may discuss how effective and appropriate it is in each case.)
- **Let's Talk:** <http://letstalk.bell.ca/en/media.php#video>

If you are unable to show videos:

- Photocopy *A New Breed of Veggie Burger* (page 9) as a handout or overhead
- Photocopy the *Print Public Service Announcements* (pages 10-12) as handouts or an overhead

For all classes:

- Review the *Let's Talk About Mental Health* student presentation.
- Print the handouts:
 - *What Makes a PSA Work?*
 - *Common Misconceptions About Mental Illnesses*
 - *Public Service Announcement Assignment Sheet*



Procedure

Begin the class by showing the commercial “E-I-E-I-O” or an alternative commercial of your choice. (Note: If you are unable to access this commercial or find it unsuitable for any reason, you may use any other recent ad. The website *Advertising in the Digital Age* [<http://www.thedigitalage.com>] is a good source for commercials online, as are the “Ad of the Day” selections on the *AdWeek* [<http://www.adweek.com/advertising-branding>] website. If you are unable to show videos, display or photocopy the print-based ad *A New Breed of Veggie Burger*.)

After viewing the video, ask the class to identify the product (vegetarian meat alternative) and briefly discuss the ways in which the ad gets you to understand and remember its message. Students will likely mention the humour and inventiveness of the animated animals made of vegetables and the use of a well-known song; you can also point out that the use of children’s voices and the imagery of a farm are a good way of making a non-traditional product seem more mainstream, and that animating the animals might make viewers more prone to buy a vegetarian alternative rather than meat.

Now show the public service announcement *House Hippo*. If you are unable to show videos, display or photocopy the print-based PSA *Don’t Try This At Home* (p. 10).

After viewing the video, ask the class to identify ways in which the PSA was similar to and different from the ad. Likely similarities will include the use of humour and special effects to get their points across, and using animals to be more appealing; differences may include the use of music in *E-I-E-I-O*, the use of faux-documentary style in *House Hippo* and, most importantly, the fact that *House Hippo* is not intended to sell a *product* but to promote a particular *behaviour* (viewing media critically). In addition, the ultimate purpose of *E-I-E-I-O* is to make money for the sponsor for the ad, while the ultimate purpose

of *House Hippo* is to educate the public. (However, it should be noted that PSAs are not always made by governments or non-profit organizations: they are often produced by for-profit companies or by industry groups that represent for-profit companies.)

If the term has not already come up in the discussion, explain to students that an ad like *House Hippo* or *Don’t Try This At Home* is called a PSA because it performs a public service rather than sells a product. Ask students if they can recall any PSAs that made an impression on them: what was it that made them memorable? Is being memorable the same as being effective? Can they think of any PSAs that have ever inspired them to take action or change their behaviour?

Distribute the handout *What Makes a PSA Work?* and explain that successful PSAs share the following characteristics:

- **They select and appeal to their target audience.** Generally, PSAs (like ads) are more successful if they can target their message to a narrower audience (teenage boys or girls, parents, seniors, etc.).
- **They give a reason why the audience should care about the issue.** A PSA is sometimes the first time a viewer will have even heard about an issue so it’s important to make an impression and show why it’s important.
- **They give viewers clear steps to take to address the issue.** The most effective PSAs are aimed at convincing viewers to do a specific thing or take a first step towards a particular behaviour (for instance, call a cab or a friend/parent instead of driving drunk).
- **They leave viewers feeling empowered and better-informed instead of guilty or depressed.** Although PSAs often address very serious issues, it’s important that they leave a viewer feeling as though they can do something to make a difference.

Using the *What Makes a PSA Work?* handout, have students evaluate the *House Hippo* or the *Don't Try This At Home* PSA together as a class. You will likely come to the following conclusions:

Does it select and appeal to the target audience?

House Hippo: The target audience isn't clear from the PSA itself, but the other PSAs on the website for Concerned Children's Advertisers (which produced it) would suggest it is aimed at kids. The faux-documentary narration is more likely to appeal to older audiences, but the imagination and cuteness of the visuals will probably appeal to kids as well. This might work as a PSA aimed at getting kids and parents to talk about the issue.

Don't Try This At Home: This public service campaign is aimed at tweens or teens, who will enjoy its absurd humour. This particular PSA is aimed at boys so we see a boy both playing a sport and being silly.

Does it give a reason why the audience should care about the issue?

House Hippo: This demonstrates effectively that what you see on TV may not be true, but it doesn't clearly communicate why this is important.

Don't Try This At Home: It's not immediately clear what the issue is in this PSA.

Does it give viewers clear steps to take to address the issue?

House Hippo: The next steps are clearly stated but somewhat vague: "Think about what you're watching on TV and ask questions." (But *which* questions?)

Don't Try This At Home: The next step (get out of the house and exercise) is implied in the tag line, but it's only clear once you understand what the topic of the PSA is.

Does it leave viewers feeling empowered and better-informed?

House Hippo: This PSA definitely leaves viewers feeling as though they are "in the know." It's easy to imagine someone sharing this video with a friend and watching them try to decide if it is real or not.

Don't Try This At Home: Not really.

Now show the remaining videos or print PSAs and have students analyze them using the work sheet *What Makes a PSA Work?* (You do not have to show all of the videos or ads if you have concerns about time or content.) You may choose to have students do their analysis in pairs to provoke further discussion.

When students have finished analyzing the videos, discuss their evaluations and ask them to defend their judgments.

Now explain that the class will be creating public service announcements aimed at correcting public misperceptions of mental illnesses. Ask students what they think they know about mental illnesses based on media portrayals and other sources: what are some common beliefs that may or may not be true? After a brief discussion, distribute or project the handout *Common Misconceptions About Mental Illnesses* and go through it with the class.

Ask students what effects these misconceptions might have on either people with mental illnesses or the general population. Make sure that the ideas of a **stigma** towards people with mental illnesses, a sense that it's not everyone's problem and reluctance among people with mental illnesses to talk about their conditions, are included.

Before continuing with the lesson, present the slideshow *Let's Talk About Mental Health* student presentation [http://mediasmarts.ca/sites/default/files/Lets_Talk_Student_Presentation.zip] to the class to help students deepen their understanding of mental health and understand the context of the lesson.

Distribute the *Public Service Announcement Assignment Sheet* and have students work in pairs or small groups to prepare a PSA poster or video aimed at correcting a popular misconception about mental illnesses.

Tell students to draw on their analyses of the PSAs they have looked at to plan how they will appeal to their target audience, make the target audience care about the issue, provide the audience with clear first steps to take and make the audience feel empowered and better-informed. (Though you should ensure that students are respectful, don't feel the need to steer them away from using humour: focus groups held with students who had experienced mental illnesses showed that they thought humour was an appropriate tool for reaching young people.) Depending on the time and equipment available to you, the PSAs can either be done as posters or videos.

If students are filming their PSAs, explain that careful planning is the key to making a good video. Before they start production, have students consider the following points:

- What is the message you want to convey?
- What visual and technical elements, such as sound and camera angles, will help to get your message across?
- What other elements may help get your message across? Consider locations (where you will film), people and props. If any of these are central to your message it's a good idea to plan around them.



Next, have each group develop a script for their video (you may wish to review each group's script before allowing them to start filming). Before students begin filming, have them consider the following points:

- Where are they filming?
- Do they have permission to film there?
- Will they have room for the camera and any other equipment?
- Will there be any problems with sound (background noise, people walking by, etc.)?
- If filming outdoors, will weather be an issue?
- Always consider safety first. Students shouldn't do anything that will put them or anyone else in danger.

Depending on the equipment available to you, the PSAs may be edited "in camera" (with the film shot in sequence so that no editing is necessary) or may be edited with editing software such as iMovie or MovieMaker.

Tell students they will be evaluated on:

- Their understanding of the elements of a successful public service announcement
- Their understanding of mental health issues
- How well their PSA appeals to their target audience
- How engaging their PSA is for their target audience
- How well their PSA educates and empowers their target audience
- The creativity and technical sophistication of their PSA

	INSUFFICIENT	LEVEL 1	LEVEL 2	LEVEL 3	LEVEL 4
Knowledge and Understanding	<p>PSA shows little or no understanding of the elements of a successful PSA</p> <p>PSA shows little or no understanding of chosen mental health issue</p>	<p>PSA shows a beginning understanding of the elements of a successful PSA</p> <p>PSA shows a beginning understanding of chosen mental health issue</p>	<p>PSA shows a developing understanding of the elements of a successful PSA</p> <p>PSA shows a developing understanding of chosen mental health issue</p>	<p>PSA shows a competent understanding of the elements of a successful PSA</p> <p>PSA shows a competent understanding of chosen mental health issue</p>	<p>PSA shows a confident understanding of the elements of a successful PSA</p> <p>PSA shows a confident understanding of chosen mental health issue</p>
Inquiry and Analysis	<p>PSA contains no elements that make it appeal to the intended audience</p> <p>PSA fails to educate or empower audience</p>	<p>PSA contains one element that makes it appeal to the intended audience</p> <p>PSA educates and empowers audience with limited effectiveness</p>	<p>PSA contains two elements that make it appeal to the intended audience</p> <p>PSA educates and empowers audience somewhat effectively</p>	<p>PSA contains three elements that make it appeal to the intended audience</p> <p>PSA educates and empowers audience effectively</p>	<p>PSA contains four or more elements that make it appeal to the intended audience</p> <p>PSA educates and empowers audience very effectively</p>
Application of Skills and Knowledge	<p>PSA has four or more major technical flaws</p> <p>PSA contains elements plagiarized from another source</p>	<p>PSA has three major technical flaws</p> <p>PSA shows little creativity</p>	<p>PSA has one or two major technical flaws</p> <p>PSA shows some creativity</p>	<p>PSA is technically competent, with no major flaws</p> <p>PSA shows significant creativity</p>	<p>PSA is technically skillful, with no major flaws and some particularly effective use of technology</p> <p>PSA shows a great deal of creativity</p>

A NEW BREED OF VEGGIE BURGER



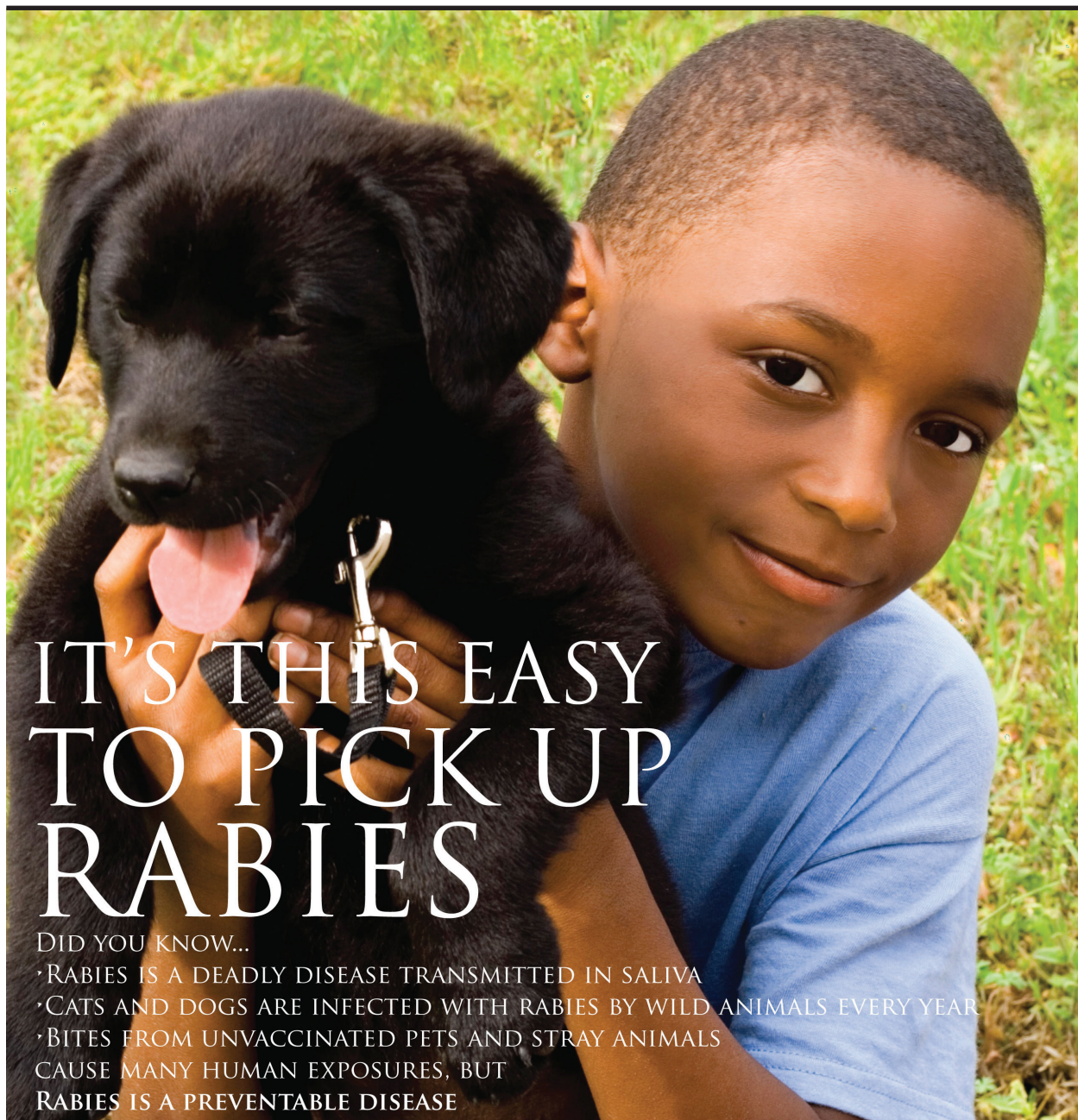
INTRODUCING THE NEW LIGHTLIFE VEGGIE BURGERS.
MORE PROOF THAT EATING WELL AND LIVING WELL CAN BE ONE AND THE SAME.

- ✓ 20G PROTEIN PER SERVING
- ✓ NON-GMO SOY
- ✓ NO PRESERVATIVES
- ✓ 100% DELICIOUS

Lightlife
Live In Good Taste.

PRINT PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENTS





IT'S THIS EASY TO PICK UP RABIES

DID YOU KNOW...

- RABIES IS A DEADLY DISEASE TRANSMITTED IN SALIVA
- CATS AND DOGS ARE INFECTED WITH RABIES BY WILD ANIMALS EVERY YEAR
- BITES FROM UNVACCINATED PETS AND STRAY ANIMALS CAUSE MANY HUMAN EXPOSURES, BUT RABIES IS A PREVENTABLE DISEASE

Protect yourself, your pet and your community:

- Vaccinate all dogs, cats and ferrets against rabies
- Avoid contact with wildlife and stray animals
- If bitten, wash the wound thoroughly, see your doctor

Working Together to Make Rabies History!



WorldRabiesDay.Org

We thought you should know:
2 in 3 people suffer in
silence fearing judgement
and rejection

We thought you should know:
Mental illness is the #1 cause
of workplace disability.

We thought you should know:
1 in 3 people don't get the
care they need.

Bell Let's Talk

WHAT MAKES A PSA WORK?

Use this chart to judge the effectiveness of each of the public service announcements you watch. Be ready to defend your answers in class discussion.

PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENT	DOES IT SELECT AND APPEAL TO THE TARGET AUDIENCE?	DOES IT GIVE A REASON WHY THE AUDIENCE SHOULD CARE ABOUT THE ISSUE?	DOES IT GIVE VIEWERS CLEAR STEPS TO TAKE TO ADDRESS THE ISSUE?	DOES IT LEAVE VIEWERS FEELING EMPOWERED AND BETTER-INFORMED?

COMMON MISCONCEPTIONS ABOUT MENTAL ILLNESSES

There are a lot of mistaken beliefs about mental illnesses that we may have gotten from friends, family, the media or just “what we think is true.” Here are the most common ones that were identified by a group of youth who are dealing with mental illnesses.

Mental illnesses are contagious. It’s impossible to “catch” a mental illness.

Mental illnesses are “all in your head.” People with mental illnesses are often told things like “You can control your mind” or “Just think of something else.” Although mental illnesses can be treated, they cannot be overcome just by “trying harder.”

People with mental illnesses are just looking for attention. In reality, people with mental illnesses will often try to *hide* their illnesses. When people with a mental illness do try to draw attention to their condition, it’s usually because they recognize that they need treatment and support.

Listening to depressing music makes people depressed. There’s no evidence that listening to sad music makes people more depressed, or even that people with depression prefer to listen to sad music. Rather, music can give people ways of understanding, dealing with and expressing emotions that we all have from time to time.

People with mental illnesses are likely to be violent. The most common media stereotype of mental illnesses is that they are tied to violence: one study in 2010 found that almost half of TV characters with mental illnesses were portrayed as violent and two-thirds of stories featuring characters with mental illnesses showed them hurting themselves. The truth is that people who suffer from mental illnesses are much more likely to be *victims* of violence than to be violent themselves.

Most people with mental illnesses are also developmentally delayed. Developmental disabilities and mental illnesses are two separate things. There is evidence that people with developmental disabilities are at a higher risk of developing mental illnesses, but the vast majority of people with mental illnesses are not developmentally delayed.

Mental illnesses cannot be treated. There are effective treatments for many mental illnesses and knowing that it is possible to recover is important in getting people with mental illnesses to get help.

You can tell just by looking at someone if they have a mental illness. Few mental illnesses have symptoms that you can spot just by looking at someone, especially if the person with the mental illness is receiving treatment.

You can tell when a friend or family member has a mental illness. It’s not at all unusual for even friends and family of a person with a mental illness not to know about it. In particular, young people with mental illnesses are often unwilling to talk to their family and friends about what they’re dealing with.

Mental illness doesn’t affect me. Mental health challenges touch all of us. One in five Canadians will suffer from a mental illness each year and one in three young people between the ages of 15 and 24 has experienced a mental health challenge. Even someone who has never had to deal with mental illnesses will almost certainly have friends or family members who do. More importantly, we as a society have a responsibility to make sure that everyone with mental or physical health challenges are given support and access to treatment.

PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENT ASSIGNMENT SHEET

For this assignment you will be preparing a public service announcement (PSA) poster or video aimed at correcting a popular misconception about mental illnesses.

Draw on your analyses of the PSAs you have looked at in class to determine how to:

- appeal to your target audience
- make them care about the issue
- provide them with clear first steps to take
- make them feel empowered and better-informed

For this assignment, you will be evaluated on:

1. Your understanding of the elements of a successful public service announcement
2. Your understanding of mental health issues
3. How well your PSA appeals to your target audience
4. How engaging your PSA is for your target audience
5. How well your PSA educates and empowers your target audience
6. The creativity and technical sophistication of your PSA

LESSON PLANS

Setting the Record Straight: Authenticating Mental Health Information Online



Duration: 2 hours

Overview

This lesson begins by having students consider the use of the Internet as a research tool and discuss its advantages and drawbacks. Students then consider the Internet as a source for information on mental health and discuss specific advantages and disadvantages in that context. The teacher introduces students to techniques for using search engines and databases more accurately and efficiently in order to produce more reliable and relevant results. Students examine and analyze several good sources of information on mental health (such as Kids Help Phone) in order to recognize the markers of a reliable source. Finally, the teacher leads a guided discussion on popular myths about mental illnesses and students investigate a list of “facts” (some true and some false) about mental illnesses and report on their findings to the class.

Learning Outcomes

Students will:

- Reflect on the strengths and weaknesses of the Internet as a research tool
- Learn and practice Internet search skills
- Become familiar with reliable online sources on mental health
- Research information on mental health
- Evaluate online sources of information on mental health

Preparation and Materials

To prepare for this lesson, please ensure you:

- Read the *Let's Talk: Finding Reliable Mental Health Information and Resources Teacher Training Guide* [http://mediasmarts.ca/sites/default/files/pdfs/Lets_Talk_Teacher_Training_Guide.pdf]
- Review the *Let's Talk: Finding Reliable Mental Health Information and Resources Teacher Training Presentation* [<http://mediasmarts.ca/sites/default/files/tutorials/teacher-training-presentation/index.html>]
- Review the *Let's Talk About Mental Health* student presentation [http://mediasmarts.ca/sites/default/files/Lets_Talk_Student_Presentation.zip].

Load the interactive quiz *Hide and Seek: How to Find What You Need Online*

Photocopy the following handouts:

- *True or False? Myths and Facts about Mental Health*
- *Internet Search Skills*
- *Reliable Sources* (make three copies per student of the second page)
- *Website Evaluation Form*

Procedure

Begin by asking students how good they think they are at finding information online. Are there things that they find easier or more difficult about online searching? Do they find it easier to search for information they need for personal reasons or information they need for school? Who would they turn to if they had trouble finding information they needed – a teacher, a parent or another adult, or a peer (a friend, sibling, etc.)?

Now ask students why they like to use the Internet for research and answers and record their responses on the board. Responses are likely to include that it's easy to access information online, it can be done quickly and that they're comfortable with the technology.

Ask students what might be some drawbacks of getting information online. It may be harder to elicit responses in this case so, if necessary, guide students to or simply add the following: information on the Internet isn't always accurate; you're not always sure who the source or author is; there's so much information you can't always sort it out; and it's easy to find things you're not looking for instead of things that you are looking for.

Now show students the *Let's Talk About Mental Health* student presentation to help them understand the context of the lesson. Make sure students are clear on the distinction between the terms *mental health* and *mental illness*: we all have mental health in the same sense that we all have physical health. People with a mental illness can still enjoy mental health and have a high quality of life and people who are never diagnosed with a mental illness can still experience mental health challenges.



Once students understand the concepts of *mental health* and *mental illness*, ask the class what they think would be the advantages and disadvantages of the Internet specifically as a source of information about mental health. Advantages are likely to be that it's anonymous and less embarrassing than talking to a person face-to-face or doing research in a public place like a library. A major disadvantage, in addition to the drawbacks considered above, is that it can be hard to find reliable information online.

Explain to students that finding any kind of information online is a skill: there are methods and tricks they can use that will help them to find what they want, get more relevant results and have fewer unwanted results.

Hide and Seek Interactive Quiz

Explain to students that they're now going to apply online search skills towards questions around mental health. Distribute the *Internet Search Skills* handout and have the class complete the *Hide and Seek: How to Find What You Need Online* interactive quiz. This can be done as a whole class (using a data projector or interactive whiteboard) by students individually or in pairs in the classroom, computer lab or at home. *(Some parts of the quiz involve reading a significant amount of text. It is recommended that you preview the quiz before doing the lesson and, if you feel your students may have difficulty with the reading involved, present it in a whole-class setting using a data projector or interactive whiteboard.)*

Alternative Internet Search Skills Exercise

If you are not able to use the *Hide and Seek* interactive quiz, do the following exercise instead:

1. Explain to students that they are now going to learn some tricks to help them when they are searching for information online, and then they will practice what they've learned by answering some questions about mental health.
2. To start, distribute and review the handout *Internet Search Skills*. Once this is done, have students imagine they have been asked to find out what the most common form of mental illness is among youth. First ask what they think the answer might be, and after a brief discussion, invite them to write on the board search strings they might use to find answers to this question online. The first few suggestions will probably be fairly rudimentary, so remind them to go through the tips for building a search string from the handout.

- **More terms:**

What are all of the relevant terms that should be included? Probably "youth" or "teens," certainly "mental illness" and "common," perhaps some forms of mental illness you suspect may be common such as "anxiety" or "depression."

Where could "OR" or "~" be usefully employed (i.e. how many similar terms are there for "youth" or "teens"? Could there be synonyms of "common"?). Are there terms that could be usefully searched as phrases ("anxiety disorder" is likely to get more relevant results than using "anxiety" as a search term).

- **Filtering bad results:**

Ask students if there are any terms they might want to exclude by using "NOT" or "-" to avoid getting irrelevant hits. Remind them that they can always refine a search after doing it, so they can use "NOT" if they find any irrelevant hits appearing.

3. Encourage students to boil down the discussion into two or three search strings such as:
 - common ~teens "mental illness"
 - ~effects teens anxiety OR depression OR schizophrenia
 - "mental illness" youth OR teens
4. Make sure to remind students that while the Internet can be a good source of health information, it's not a good idea to use online resources to diagnose yourself, your family members or friends. If students are concerned about their or someone else's physical or mental health they should always go to a parent, a medical professional or another adult they trust.

When students are done, ask them:

- What did they have to do to find the information they needed? What tools or techniques did they use that helped them to find it? (e.g. NOT, quotation marks, site-specific searches.)
- What sources did different students end up using? How did they decide to use those sources?
- How did they know if the source they used was reliable? What were some clues to its reliability or unreliability? (The Web address, who runs the site, whether the site's author has any authority on the topic, whether the site has any hidden motives such as trying to sell things.)

Make sure to remind students that while the Internet can be a good source of health information, it's not a good idea to use online resources to diagnose yourself, your family members or friends. If students are concerned about their or someone else's physical or mental health they should always go to a parent, a medical professional or another adult they trust.

Myths and Facts about Mental Health

Distribute or project the handout *True or False? Myths and Facts about Mental Health* and review it with students. As you go through it, ask them to circle "True" or "False" for each question but not to share their opinions at this point.

Now divide the class into pairs or groups and have students research the statements in the handout to find out whether or not each one is true. For each statement have students record the search strings and websites they are using to find the information they need.

Once the groups have finished their research, have them share their findings (and correct them if necessary, using the *True or False? Myths and Facts about Mental Health Answer Sheet*). Each time a student or group volunteers an answer, ask them for the name and URL of the website they used as a resource.

Correct answers are in bold.

1. Most people with mental illnesses start to get them as children.

True False

2. Most people with a mental illness are likely to be violent.

True **False**

3. Most people with mental illnesses are also developmentally delayed.

True **False**

4. Mental illnesses are the most common cause of disability in young Canadians.

True False

5. Mental illnesses can be contagious.

True **False**

6. There are effective treatments for most mental illnesses.

True False

Reliable Sources

Explain to students that in addition to using search engines, another option for finding information about mental health online is to use websites that specialize in mental health that are known to be trustworthy.

But before you can bookmark these trusted sources, you need to establish that they are reputable. Distribute the handout *Reliable Sources* and talk students through the answers. Then, as a class, individually or in groups, have students navigate to the three websites listed below and evaluate each one using the handout:

- www.kidshelpphone.ca
- <http://mindyourmind.ca>
- <http://www.cmha.ca>

Ask students: What clues were present about the reliability of each site? How useful did each site seem as a source of information, and why? (These are all authoritative sites so it's important to stress *how* students know they're reliable.)

How Much Does the Internet Know?

To close the lesson, return to the question of the strengths and weaknesses of the Internet as a source of information on mental health and ask students if they have identified any new strengths or weaknesses. Point out that as with any medium, the Internet is only as strong as the sources of information that you use – which makes it vital to be sure that each source you use is reliable.

Distribute the handout *Website Evaluation Form* and have students return to their groups. Have each group choose three of the sources they used when they were researching their myths and evaluate them using questions in the handout (if they consulted fewer than three sites, have them evaluate one or more of the “reliable sources” provided above).

Have students share their findings with the class and have each group name one site they felt was the best resource on mental health information for youth.

INTERNET SEARCH SKILLS

The Internet is a terrific source of information on all kinds of topics. But sometimes it's **too** good: there's so much information out there, it can be hard to find just what you're looking for.

Most of the time, we use **search engines** like Google or Yahoo to help us find things. Search engines catalogue part of what's on the Internet, but they're only as smart as you are: they give you exactly what you ask for. If you're not specific enough, you may not get the information you need.

The words you use in a search engine are called your **search terms**. All of them together are called your **query** or **search string**. In general, the **more relevant words** you include in your query, the better your results will be.

As well as the actual words you're searching for, most search engines will let you add OR and NOT to your search to limit the number of results.

Including OR between two words means that you will get results that include either word. This is good when you have two words that are synonyms or close in meaning.

For example, "manic depression" is an older term that was replaced by "bipolar," but because this term is still sometimes used, if you are searching for information about bipolar disorder, it is a good idea to include "manic depression" in your search string.

Example:

manic depression OR bipolar

You can also use the tilde sign (~) to look for a word and any words that mean the same thing. For example, a search for "~bipolar" will also search for "manic depression," because the two words mean the same thing.

Placing NOT before a word means that you will only get results that **do not** include that word. This helps eliminate many irrelevant results. You can also do this by putting a minus sign (-) before the word or words you want to exclude.

Using NOT or a minus sign is helpful when a term is important in more than one situation. For example, if you're searching for information about depression you may find a lot of your search results are about the Great Depression of the 1930s. By keeping out any results that include the word "history" you can avoid a lot of these irrelevant hits.

Example:

depression NOT history
depression -history

You can also search for a whole phrase by placing it within quotes. This means you will get only results where those words occur exactly as they are quoted. For example, if you want information about manic depression, and don't want separate search results for "manic" and for "depression," you would enter the whole phrase in quotation marks:

"Manic depression"

You can also limit your search to a particular website by placing "site:" and then the site's URL (Web address) after your search string. This is useful if you know of a good site and want to find particular information there. For example, if you are looking for information about schizophrenia on the Kids Help Phone website you would enter:

Schizophrenia site:www.kidshelpphone.ca

TRUE OR FALSE? MYTHS AND FACTS ABOUT MENTAL HEALTH

There are a lot of myths about mental health and mental illness. Use search engines and reliable sources to find out which of the statements below are true and which are false. (Even if you think you know the answer, look it up.)

1. Most people with mental illnesses start to get them as children.

True False

Website(s) used:

Search string(s) used:

2. Most people with a mental illness are likely to be violent.

True False

Website(s) used:

Search string(s) used:

3. Most people with mental illnesses are also developmentally delayed.

True False

Website(s) used:

Search string(s) used:

4. Mental illnesses are the most common cause of disability in young Canadians.

True False

Website(s) used:

Search string(s) used:

5. Mental illnesses can be contagious.

True False

Website(s) used:

Search string(s) used:

6. There are effective treatments for most mental illnesses.

True False

Website(s) used:

Search string(s) used:

RELIABLE SOURCES

The Internet is full of sources of information, but not all are created equal. Some are reliable, but others are trying to persuade you or sell you things, some are just jokes and some are just individual opinions that could actually be harmful.

You can find out if a website is useful by considering the following questions:

1. What is the website's purpose?

- Is it to inform, entertain or persuade, to sell something, to make a joke?
- How do you know?

2. Who is behind the screen?

- Has someone taken responsibility for what is written there? Is an author's name listed?
- Is information about the author or organization clearly stated?
- Can you contact the author or the organization?
- Are there links to detailed information about the author or organization?
- Who links to the site? (Go to Google or your preferred search engine and search "link:" and the site's URL, as in "link:www.mediasmarts.ca." Do not put a space between "link:" and the URL.)

3. Is the information biased in any way?

- Is there a connection between the author's viewpoint and the organization he or she represents? (You can do a Web search on the author or the organization to help you figure that out.)
- Is emotion a big part of what the site uses to try to persuade you?
- Does the author use "loaded language" (words that get a strong emotional reaction) or make broad statements that are not supported by evidence?
- Can the information be verified from other sources?
- Does the site offer more than one point of view or link to other points of view?

4. Is the information up to date?

- Is it important that information about your topic be up to date?
- Does the site show when the information was created and last updated?
- Do all the links still work?

Use the worksheets on the following pages to evaluate three websites on mental health information.

RELIABLE SOURCES (CONTINUED)

Website title:

URL:

Is the site's purpose to inform, entertain or persuade, to sell something, to make a joke?

How do you know?

Is an author's name listed? What is it?

Is information about the author or organization clearly stated? What is it?

Can you contact the author or the organization? What contact information is given?

Are there links to detailed information about the author or organization?

Who links to the site?

Is there a connection between the author's viewpoint and the organization he or she represents? (You can do a Web search on the author or the organization to help you figure that out.)

Is emotion a big part of what the site uses to try to persuade you?

Does the author use "loaded language" (words that get a strong emotional reaction) or make broad statements that are not supported by evidence? Give examples if so.

Does the site offer more than one point of view or links to other points of view? Give an example if so.

Is the information up to date? How do you know?

Do all the links still work? List any broken links.

WEBSITE EVALUATION FORM

Website title:

URL:

Did you find the information you were looking for on this site?

How easy was it to find? Why?

Was the information presented in a way that was engaging and easy to understand? Give examples of why or why not.

Was the information you found on this site reliable? How do you know?

Was the information you found on this site complete or were there other things you would have liked to have know?

Did the site seem biased in any way? How do you know?

Do you think this is a site young people would want to visit to get information on mental health challenges? Why or why not?



LESSON PLANS

Seeking Help

Duration: 1 hour–90 minutes

Overview

Section I – Seeking Help

In this lesson, students will learn that everyone needs help (i.e. seeking help is universal) and *where and how to seek help*. Within small groups, students will discuss and list various social support networks (e.g. friends, family, teachers, etc.) and formal mental health resources that are available to them within their community (e.g. Kids Help Phone, community counselling, family doctors, etc.). The teacher will document the students' suggestions on an infographic (which will remain in the classroom for future reference). Students will then discuss when and how a young person may access such supports.

Section II – Kids Help Phone Counsellor Interview

Afterwards, the students will have the opportunity to speak directly with a Kids Help Phone counsellor. Prior to this conversation the students will formulate questions they would like to ask the counsellor; the students will play the role of 'interviewers' when they talk with the counsellor.

For the purposes of this pilot, please contact Natalie Montgomery to arrange the interview with the Kids Help Phone counsellor.

Contact Information

Natalie Montgomery
Phone: 613-562-5800, ext. 0378
Email: natalie.montgomery@uottawa.ca

Please note: this contact information will only be available to schools participating in the Bell *Let's Talk* pilot program.

Learning Outcomes

Students will:

- Understand that *everyone* (including youth and adults) needs help from various people throughout their lives
- Identify people/organizations that are available to help youth within their surrounding community including formal services and personal social networks
- Identify when and how an individual may seek help
- Understand the services offered by Kids Help Phone

Preparation and Materials

To prepare for this lesson, please ensure you:

- Read the *Let's Talk: Finding Reliable Mental Health Information and Resources Teacher Training Guide* [http://mediasmarts.ca/sites/default/files/pdfs/Lets_Talk_Teacher_Training_Guide.pdf]
- Review the *Let's Talk: Finding Reliable Mental Health Information and Resources Teacher Training Presentation* [<http://mediasmarts.ca/sites/default/files/tutorials/teacher-training-presentation/index.html>]
- Review the *Let's Talk About Mental Health* student presentation [http://mediasmarts.ca/sites/default/files/Lets_Talk_Student_Presentation.zip].

To prepare for this lesson teachers will need:

- Large poster-sized Infographic
- *Supportive Relationships in My Community* infographic worksheet
- *Seeking Help Scenarios*
- Scrap paper

Procedure

Section I – Social Support Networks

Introduction

Prior to starting the lesson present the *Let's Talk About Mental Health* student presentation to your class.

Organize the students into small groups (3–4 students per group). Each group selects a writer, a speaker and a timer.

Outline the learning objectives of the lesson. Specifically, inform the class that during the lesson the students will think of different people/places that someone may go to when they are in need of help and support for a mental/emotional health concern. Inform the students that they will never be asked to share personal information about their own mental/emotional health concerns. Rather, the students will focus on the people and places available to an average Grade 7 or 8 student living within their city/town.

After discussing the learning objectives, facilitate a class discussion about the universality of seeking help (*i.e. everyone needs help sometimes*). Ask the class: *Who needs help? Does everybody need help? When do people need help (what do youth need help with)? When do people need help with their health? When do people need help with their emotions?*

The students should recognize that everyone needs help sometimes. They should recognize that people get help for many different reasons, including: physical health (doctors), education (teachers) and finances (parents/guardians). It should be highlighted that everyone also needs help and support with mental and emotional health from time to time (both from established relationships and formal or informal supports).

Seeking Help Scenarios

Select a scenario (from page 31) and read it to the class. After reading the scenario ask the students to discuss the following in their groups: *Where could the main character in the scenario go to find help?*

Within their groups, have all students think of different places the character in the scenario could go to find help. The writer from each group should write down their responses on a scrap piece of paper. The groups will have a set time limit to come up with their answers (e.g. 2–3 minutes). Although this should not be a competition, it may be fun to encourage the students to see how many answers they can come up with within the time limit.

If the students are having a difficult time thinking of answers, encourage them to think of *anyone* who can help. For example: *It could be someone they see every day; it could also be someone they have never met before (e.g., a police officer, or doctor).*

If the class is still having trouble thinking of different resources, you may want to ask facilitating questions. For example: *What if they don't want to talk to someone they know? What if they don't want to talk to someone in person?*

After 2–3 minutes, ask each group to share three of their suggestions with the class (the groups should avoid repeating suggestions of the other groups).



Document the students' responses on the large poster-sized infographic using a permanent marker. You may choose to categorize the students' suggestions. For example, you may use subheadings (e.g. 'family') and write a list underneath (e.g. 'mother, father, brother, sister', etc.).

Note: After the lesson, please display the large poster-sized infographic so it may be used by the students as a resource.

As you document the students' suggestions on the poster-sized infographic, engage the class in a discussion about the accessibility of mental health resources. For example, when a student suggests a formal mental health resource (such as a doctor or a counsellor), ask students how someone their age (within their town/community) might access such a service. For example, you may want to ask: *How can someone make an appointment to see a counsellor? Do you need your parent's permission to see a counsellor? Do all counsellors cost money? (Remind the students that they should avoid discussing their personal experiences; these are general questions about anyone their age.)* You may choose to document some of this information on the large poster-sized infographic as well.

When a group suggests an informal mental health resource (such as a parent/guardian, sibling or friend), highlight that interpersonal relationships (such as parents/guardians, aunts/uncles, grandparents, etc.) are one of the most important forms of support. You may want to ask the students: *Are parents and family an important form of support/help? Why? (Note: please keep in mind that many students may not receive substantial support from their immediate families. You may want to focus on the message: having people who care about us is important, opposed to naming specific titles, like parents.)*

If there is more time available, you may read another scenario. Try to choose a scenario which should elicit different responses from the class.

Personal Supports

Distribute the individualized *Supportive Relationships in My Community* infographic worksheets to each student. Remind them to complete the infographic at home, so that they can refer to them when in times of need. Encourage the students to think about the people available to them within their personal lives; people who they would realistically go to for help. It may include friends and family, family doctors and teachers, etc. Each infographic will have Kids Help Phone included, a resource available to all students.

Section II – Kids Help Phone Counsellor Interview

Note: Please contact Natalie Montgomery to arrange the interview.

Before the interview, ask the groups to think of questions they would like to ask the Kids Help Phone counsellor. You may want to encourage the students to think of themselves as ‘journalists’. The students should be encouraged to ask the counsellor *anything* about the services. Remind the students that this is not a personal counselling call about issues they want to seek help about but rather, a way to find out more about Kids Help Phone.

The counsellor will phone into the classroom (as arranged before the lesson). The students will have the opportunity to ask the counsellor questions. The counsellor will engage the students in a discussion and offer insight into the services offered by Kids Help Phone.

Should time permit, students may complete the following extension activities.

Extension Activities

Activity I – Kids Help Phone Infographic

After the discussion with the Kids Help Phone counsellor, the class has the option to make a ‘Kids Help Phone infographic’. On the infographic, the class may list what they learned about the services offered by Kids Help Phone (e.g. it is anonymous and confidential) and when someone may choose to use the service (e.g. it might be for any reason, there is nothing too big or small to call about).

Teacher Prompts

- What did you learn about Kids Help Phone today?
- What does anonymous and confidential mean?
- What sorts of calls does Kids Help Phone get?

Potential Student Responses

- Kids Help Phone is a free 24/7 counselling service for youth.
- Kids Help Phone does not know whose calling and can’t find out. Anyone who calls and what they talk about are always kept between the counsellor and the person contacting them, except if there may be a risk to someone’s safety in which case the person would be encouraged to get immediate help with the support of the counsellor.
- Kids Help Phone gets a lot of different types of calls. What they talk about is always up to the caller.

Activity II – Kids Help Phone Article

After the interview with Kids Help Phone, the students may write a newspaper article about Kids Help Phone. This might link well with a language/writing lesson. Perhaps a student's article can be printed in the school newspaper or bulletin.

Teacher Prompt

- What did you learn about Kids Help Phone today?
- What does anonymous and confidential mean?
- What sorts of calls does Kids Help Phone get?
- What sorts of people work at Kids Help Phone?

Potential Student Responses

- Kids Help Phone is a free 24/7 counselling service for youth.
- Kids Help Phone does not know whose calling and can't find out. Anyone who calls and what they talk about are always kept between the counsellor and the person contacting them, except if there may be a risk to someone's safety in which case the person would be encouraged to get immediate help with the support of the counsellor.
- Kids Help Phone gets a lot of different types of calls. What they talk about is always up to the caller.
- Kids Help Phone has professional counsellors who are similar to other people that you know, who like sports, music and anything in between.

Activity III – Kids Help Phone Journal

Individually, the students can write a journal entry about their experience 'interviewing' the Kids Help Phone counsellor. The students may want to write about what they think of Kids Help Phone and some new things they have learned.

Teacher Prompts

- What do you think draws young people to contact Kids Help Phone?
- What did you think of the counsellor?
- Did you learn anything new about Kids Help Phone?
- Did you enjoy the presentation?

Potential Student Responses

- Kids Help Phone is free and you can call them anytime you want.
- When you call Kids Help Phone, the call is *your* call. The counsellor is there to listen and help *you* think of ways to improve your situation.
- Kids Help Phone isn't there just for bullying, you can call if there is *anything* you would like to talk about.
- Kids Help Phone is completely anonymous and confidential; that means they don't know whose calling and can't find out.



Seeking Helping Scenarios

Select one or more scenario to read to your class. Remember to consider your student's backgrounds when choosing a scenario; it is advisable that you do not choose a scenario which may reflect a student's current struggle.

Scenarios

1. Helena is being cyberbullied. Helena has tried to create new accounts, but somehow the same people always find a way to bully her online. The people who bully her say some pretty mean things to her and they have even threatened to beat her up. Helena has tried to ignore it, but this is starting to get to her. She feels violated and she is finding it harder to trust people and is starting to keep her distance from others; she just can't understand how anyone could be so mean. Helena doesn't like the way she has been feeling and wants to change. Where might she go for help?
2. Leon is a Grade 8 student. He does pretty well with most subjects and always tries to do a decent job with his homework and projects. As Leon gets closer to high school, his parents want to see him get better grades. Leon's parents hired a tutor; they told him that if he doesn't get at least 90% on his upcoming math test they will ground him for a week. Leon is feeling like he is under a lot of pressure; he tries to talk to his parents about it, but it always turns into a fight. This has been causing him a lot of stress. He feels like he needs someone to talk to; like he needs to get everything off his chest. Who could he talk to?
3. Jake is having a tough time at school. He has a big presentation coming up, but he hates talking in front of the class. No one else in the class seems worried about the presentation, so Jake acts like he isn't worried either. But the truth is, Jake is really nervous and feels like he's the only one that feels this way. He's starting to feel like there is something wrong with him. Is there anyone he could talk to?
4. Chris and Piers were best friends, but Piers' family suddenly had to move to another town. It's been a couple of months since Piers moved and even though they promised to talk to each

other through their favorite videogame, Piers hasn't been on for two weeks. Chris is starting to feel really lonely; he's starting to ignore his other friends and doesn't feel like doing much the past couple of days. Chris is feeling alone and wants someone to talk to but he doesn't want to bother anybody. Is there anyone Chris can talk to?

5. Ada is constantly teased by her older sister, Sherri. Ada has talked to her parents about this, but Sherri just won't stop. It's starting to get so bad that Ada has lost some of her self-confidence. She has started to believe some of the mean things her sister says and is starting to feel like nobody likes her. Ada needs to talk to someone about this, but isn't sure who she can talk to. Who could she talk to?
6. Claire has been really down for the past couple of weeks. She hasn't gone out with any of her friends for the past month and has been absent from school a lot. When she is at school she barely talks to anyone. Claire's friends have tried to talk to her about her feelings; she says she's been feeling depressed and wants to change, but feels hopeless. Is there anywhere Claire could go to talk to someone?

Teacher Prompts

If the students are struggling to think of **formal** resources (such as doctors, counsellors, etc.), the following facilitative questions may help:

- What if the main character* (in the scenario) isn't comfortable talking to one of their friends or family?
- What if the main character* isn't comfortable talking to someone they know?
- What if the main character* isn't comfortable talking to someone in person?

If the students are struggling to think of **informal** social networks (such as friends, family, etc.), the following questions may help:

- What if the main character* isn't comfortable talking to a stranger?
- What if the main character* wants to talk to someone they know?

* please use the character's name from your scenario.

Name: _____

Date: _____

Supportive Relationships in My Community

Please think about all the different people, places or things in your community that can offer support and help. You can write them anywhere on the page!



Kids Help Phone is always there for you, 24/7, 365 days a year online and by phone.

If you feel stuck trying to think of healthy and supportive relationships, try thinking about what sorts of people or things that help you feel good about yourself—it could be someone that always says hello to you, a favourite pet, or an online friend.