Schools as a Setting for Promoting Positive Mental Health: A Pan-Canadian Toolkit Using a Comprehensive School Health Approach

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Pan-Canadian Joint Consortium for School Health

- 12 member provinces/territories across health & education ministries
- Support from Public Health Agency of Canada
- Leadership, Capacity Building, Knowledge Development
- A bridge among policy, research and practice
- A “Comprehensive School Health” (CSH) approach
Comprehensive School Health

Health for a lifetime begins in childhood & involves the whole school community

- parents
- students
- educators,
- health professionals
- policymakers
- community groups*

*JCSH, (2010), CJPH Supplement
JCSH and PMH

2010: In consultation with educational and school health stakeholders from across Canada, the JCSH published, *Schools as a Setting for Promoting Positive Mental Health: Better and Perspectives*

- Basis of PMH Indicator Framework and Toolkit

2012: PMH Toolkit is launched

- Contributions from Public Health Agency of Canada, Government of British Columbia, Government of New Brunswick
- Developed with, and extensively piloted by, educators and experts in the field
School as a Critical Setting

- Critical contexts for shaping children’s self-esteem, self-efficacy and sense of control over their lives
- Key opportunities for the delivery of activities and initiatives related to positive mental health
- The powerful influence of teacher support and peer networks

“Personally, we spend more time at school than at home, and it is the place where we build most of our connections. Sometimes we cannot go to our homes or family for support, and our peers are where we go.”

-- Youth, Healthy Advice Workshop
2009-2010 Health Behaviour in School-aged Children Study (HBSC)
Connected & Included at School

- Schools that provide a safe, inclusive climate have students who feel connected to school
- Students who are connected to school have more positive mental health than those who are not connected
- Highly victimized students are more likely to engage in physical violence as their perceived levels of peer and adult support at school diminishes
- Educational attainment relates to well-being and health

IMPORTANT TO KEEP YOUTH IN SCHOOL!
HBSC: School Relationships

Percentage of Students having a High Quality Relationship with their School

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Grade 6</td>
<td>40.7%</td>
<td>50.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade 7</td>
<td>29.6%</td>
<td>34.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade 8</td>
<td>25.7%</td>
<td>24.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade 9</td>
<td>21.8%</td>
<td>22.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade 10</td>
<td>20.6%</td>
<td>21.4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source HBSC, 2010
The JCSH PMH Toolkit
- available on the JCSH website at: www.jcsh-cces.ca
The JCSH PMH Toolkit

- A free, interactive web-based resource
- Available in English and French
- Takes a team approach
- Provides opportunity to start small and proceed at your own pace
- Taking a PMH approach does not have to cost a lot – often a shift in the way we think, plan, act
- More than just the school – the school community
- School ownership, empowerment: self-assessment
Features of the Toolkit

Within the toolkit, schools will find:

• An introduction to the key concepts of positive mental health

• Instructional videos, worksheets and additional resources to facilitate positive mental health training and professional development with educators

• Checklists and inventories for analyzing existing school-based positive mental health practices
PMH Toolkit: Overview

Chapter 1: Introduction
Chapter 2: Positive Mental Health Components
Chapter 3: Putting it Into Action

❖ Stages of Change
❖ Positive Mental Health Indicator Framework
❖ Steps to Implementation

Chapter 4: Resources
❖ Sample Planning Tool
❖ Four Pillars Checklists

Appendices
❖ A. Authentic Parent Engagement
❖ B. Authentic Student Engagement
❖ C. Positive Mental Health Presentation
❖ D. Positive Mental Health for Everyone (brochure)
Key Concepts in PMH

Positive Mental Health

- Social-Emotional Learning
- Positive Development
- Understanding Student Mental Health Needs
- Protective Factors
- Mental Fitness
- Strength-based Perspectives
- Autonomy
- Supportive
- Resiliency
- Diversity
- Self Efficacy
Paradigm Shift

• The emergence of positive mental health perspectives has shifted the focus of educators and health professionals from a preoccupation with repairing weakness to enhancement of positive qualities (McDougal & Riley-Tillman, 2004, p. 101).

• Such qualities or factors may include:
  - Positive individual traits
  - Positive personal experiences and relationships
  - Initiatives, programs and environments that assist in:
    • Enhancing quality of life
    • Preventing or reducing the risk of developing mental health–related concerns
What Educators Are Saying

“I was glad to see that the framework provides a thorough explanation of Prochaska's Stages of Change model with the acknowledgement that change does not happen quickly or all at once.”

“The Comprehensive School Health Framework is especially appealing due to its holistic focus on the school as a place, persons and community of learners.”

“… a foundations document for use by our Student Services Team in developing interest and understanding in the teaching staff.”
What Educators Are Saying

“…takes all the guess work out of how a school is supposed to progress toward a mentally healthy school.”

“…clearly identifies the importance of applying a positive mental health perspective to all school actions and interactions.”

“…provides many correlates of positive mental health that are in line with many of the outcomes that the education system is striving to reach.”

“… an extremely useful resource in professional development for teachers.”
The JCSH PMH Toolkit

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Building on the Momentum…

Do you see the PMH Toolkit being used in your work with schools and organizations?