

Introduction

Hi everyone,

My name is Rose Hardie and I am a contact guider with 1st Collins Bay Pathfinders and Rangers as well as with 2nd Kingston Brownies. I am a TEAM trainer, a Girls First Champion and a event planner with community 25 and Sugar and Spice Adventures, a adventure based company focusing on empowering women.

This session is only intended as a guide and should not be replaced for professional medical advice or help.

I have provided you all with a handout package that includes all the info from this session as well as helpful links and contact numbers.

Thank you all for making the time to be here today at this wellbeing and mental health session. I am excited that we are here together to share and learn from each other, and to find ways we all can encourage each girl and each other to be everything she wants to be!

Outline

In this session you will learn about:

- What is well-being and mental health?
- How does it affect us?
- How can we help ourselves and others?

Parking lot

- We have only a short time to cover this extensive topic today so if you have any questions or concerns that arise while I'm presenting, could you please use the sticky notes provided to write down any questions or concerns. You can then place them on the parking lot in centre of table and I will address them at the Q and A at the end of the session. Thanks

Icebreaker

(5 min)

- We are going to start off with a quick icebreaker, on your table you will notice 2 playing cards on top of your handout package.
- Sticking to your table groups I would like you to share a little about yourself with everyone there.
- If you have a **spade** I want you to share what is your **biggest stress** right now.
- If you have a **club** I like you to share what **makes you anxious** or gives you anxiety.
- If you have a **heart** I like you to share what **gives you the most joy** in life.
- If you have a **diamond** I like you to share one thing you are **grateful for.**
- I will give you 5 minutes to discuss and then we will move forward.

Section 1 (15 min): What is mental health?

Objectives

By the end of this section you will be able to:

- **Define and give examples of mental health**
- **Understand who it affects**
- **Explain why it is important**

Section 1 activity:

True and False (5min)

- I will ask you a series of true and false questions. If you think the answer is true I like you to stand up and If you think they are false I would like you to stay seated. This activity is intended to open your eyes to some of the realities and myths surrounding mental health.

Definition and examples of what mental health is...

The **World Health Organization** defines it as:

"Mental health is not just the absence of mental disorder. It is defined as a state of well-being in which every individual realizes his or her own potential, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to her or his community."

That's a pretty tall order. Who defines what the normal stresses are anyway? Daily life would be more accurate. I would also hope that work includes more than just your job – hobbies, passions, chores, etc.

Now **Mind's booklet on How to improve mental wellbeing** says:

Good mental health is about your behavior - what you do.

"You care about yourself and you care for yourself. You love yourself, not hate yourself.

You look after your physical health – eat well, sleep well, exercise and enjoy yourself.

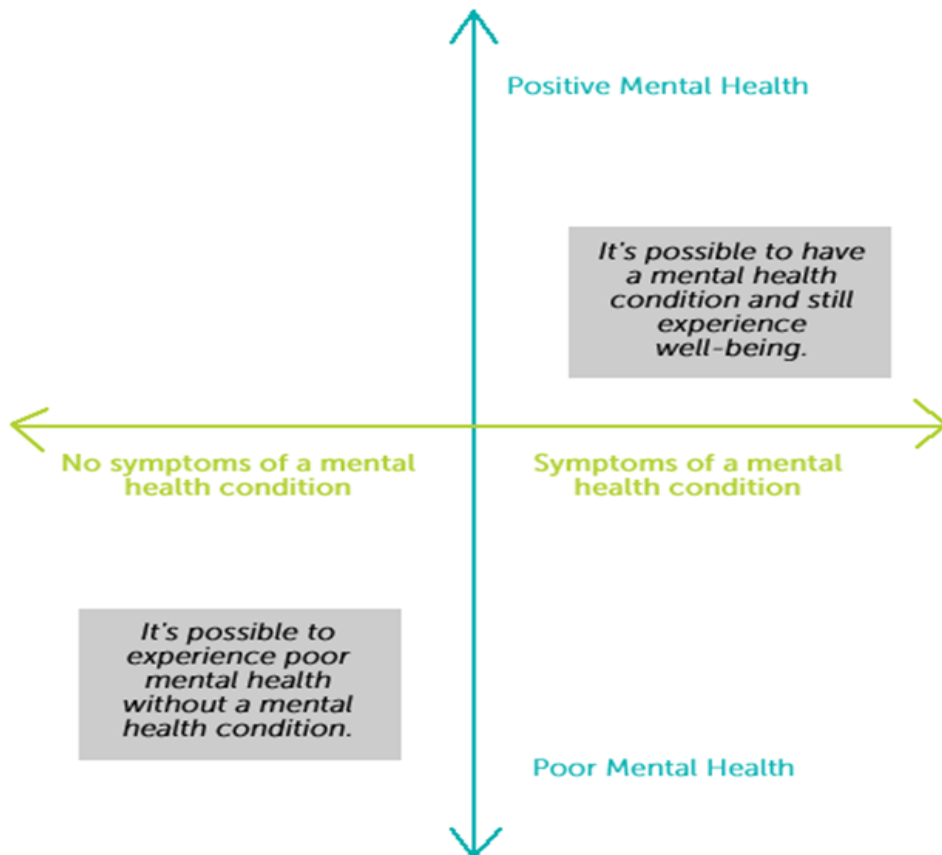
You see yourself as being a valuable person in your own right. You don't have to earn the right to exist.

You exist, so you have the right to exist.

You judge yourself on reasonable standards. You don't set yourself impossible goals, such as 'I have to be perfect in everything I do', and then punish yourself when you don't reach those goals."

That sounds more realistic, if not optimistic. I certainly couldn't be that way every day. One of most important things to realize is that mental health is a spectrum, or a continuum, and that applies to everyone. It's part of the human condition. There are days when you are at one end and there are days when you are way at the extreme end.

Mental health impacts each and every one of us. We all have mental health, just as we all have physical health. People living with a mental health issue or condition can experience positive mental health, and an individual may experience poor mental health without a mental health condition. Mental health is not fixed. It is influenced by a range of factors, including our life experiences, workplace or other environments, and the social and economic conditions that shape our lives



Two-continuum model

I guess the goal is to stay somewhere in the middle most of the time

- What do you think?
- How would you define mental wellbeing?
- What does “good” mental health look like for you?

I will give you 5 minutes to discuss this at your table, then I will get a couple volunteers to share.

Who does Mental Health affect...

These are the Facts put out by: The Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA)

Who is affected?

- Mental illness indirectly affects all Canadians at some time through a family member, friend or colleague.
- In any given year, 1 in 5 people in Canada will personally experience a mental health problem or illness.
- Mental illness affects people of all ages, education, income levels, and cultures.
- Approximately 8% of adults will experience major depression at some time in their lives.
- About 1% of Canadians will experience bipolar disorder (or “manic depression”).

How common is it?

- By age 40, about 50% of the population will have or have had a mental illness.
- Anxiety disorders affect 5% of the household population, causing mild to severe impairment.
- Suicide accounts for 24% of all deaths among 15-24 year olds and 16% among 25-44 year olds.
- Suicide is one of the leading causes of death in both men and women from adolescence to middle age.

Why is mental health and wellbeing important?

- Healthier lifestyles
- Better physical health
- Improved recovery from illness
- Fewer limitations in daily living
- Higher educational attainment
- Greater productivity
- Greater employment and earnings
- Better relationships
- Increased social cohesion
- **Improved quality of life.**

Mental Illness: True or False Questions

I will ask you a series of true and false questions.

If you think the answer is true I like you to stand up and If you think they are false I would like you to stay seated.

- 1. Mental health is defined as a constant feeling of contentment.**
- 2. Mental illness is common.**
- 3. Mental illness is a single disorder.**
- 4. Mental illness is caused by a personal weakness.**
- 5. People with mental illness are not more violent and dangerous than the general population.**
- 6. Mental illness can affect anyone, regardless of level of intelligence, social class or income level.**

Mental Illness: True or False Questions

- 1. False.** Mental health is defined as striking a balance in all aspects of your life (social, physical, spiritual, economic, mental). Not a constant feeling of contentment
- 2. True.** Mental illness is very common. One in five Canadians will experience some form of mental illness in their lifetime. Mental illnesses are more common than cancer, So why is it that discussing *mental health* is so taboo?
- 3. False.** Mental illness is not a single illness, but a broad classification for many disorders, including:
 - Anxiety disorders (ex: Post Traumatic Stress Disorder)
 - mood disorders (ex: Bipolar Disorder, Major Depression)
 - Schizophrenia eating disorders (ex: Anorexia, Bulimia)
 - personality disorders (ex: Borderline Personality)
- 4. False.** A mental illness is not a character flaw It is an illness, and it has nothing to do with being weak or lacking will-power. Although people with mental illness can play a big part in their own recovery, they did not choose to become ill, and they are not lazy because they cannot just "snap out of it."
- 5. True.** While popular media often portrays people with mental illness as violent and dangerous, the truth is that, as a group, people experiencing mental illness are no more violent than any other group. In fact, they are far more likely to be the victims of violence than to be violent themselves.
- 6. True.** No one, regardless of intelligence, social status, economic condition or educational level is immune from suffering from mental illness. Mental illness can affect anyone!

Section 2 (15 min):

What is mental health and well-being?

Objectives

By the end of this section you will be able to:

- **Understand what factors affect our well-being and mental health.**
- **Recognize signs and symptoms of mental illness.**
- **Understand how mental illness affects a person's everyday life.**

Section 2 activity:

Draw your head (5min)

- I would like you to take one of the blank pieces of paper provided with your handout package and I want you to draw your head and fill it up with words and pictures of all the things going on inside your head on a daily basis.
- You do not need to share this with me or others if you don't want, but if there is a few braves ones at the table who like to share in your groups that is encouraged.
- This activity is intended to show you that you are not alone and that many others are feeling similar insecurities, stresses and doubts.

What factors affect our well-being and mental health

1. *"Loneliness is feeling sad about being by yourself, particularly over a long period of time. Isolation is being separated from other people and your environment. Loneliness can sometimes be felt even in relationships or when surrounded by people."*
2. *"Grief is a natural response to loss ."*
3. *"Domestic and family violence is when you feel unsafe, powerless or afraid due to the actions of someone close to you."*
4. *"Bullying is when a person is repeatedly and intentionally subjected to verbal, physical and/or social behavior that causes physical and/or psychological harm."*
5. *"Unemployment, redundancy, loss of a business, large investment losses or other financial loss can have a negative impact on your mental health."*
6. *"Understanding your sexuality can be confusing. Homophobia and transphobia can lead to specific stresses for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender, intersex and/or questioning (LGBTI+) people. Along with this, young LGBTI+ people not only have to deal with the normal stresses of growing up but may also experience other stresses like isolation, name-calling and bullying."*

7. *“A good night’s sleep is essential to our mental and physical health and wellbeing. A lack of sleep can have a major impact on our mood, concentration, memory and quality of life. Good quality sleep is about the amount of ‘deep sleep’ a person gets, not the length of sleep. From time-to-time everybody experiences problems with sleeping. This can include having trouble getting to sleep or waking up frequently and not being able to get back to sleep.”*

8. *“During difficult times in life, people sometimes turn to alcohol or other drugs to help them cope. People may use alcohol and other drugs as a coping mechanism for their mental health issues. Alcohol and other drug use can also cause anxiety, depression, paranoia and psychosis in those people who have a vulnerability to mental health issues. Alcohol and other drug use changes the way you behave, feel and make decisions.”*

9. *“There are times across your life when you are more vulnerable to experiencing mental health issues. These times are related to major changes in your life or when you are transitioning from one stage of life to another, which may place extra stress on you.”*

Recognize signs and symptoms of mental illness

Symptoms

Signs and symptoms of mental illness can vary, depending on the disorder, circumstances and other factors. Mental illness symptoms can affect emotions, thoughts and behaviors.

Examples of signs and symptoms include:

- Feeling sad or down
- Confused thinking or reduced ability to concentrate
- Excessive fears or worries, or extreme feelings of guilt
- Extreme mood changes of highs and lows
- Withdrawal from friends and activities
- Significant tiredness, low energy or problems sleeping
- Detachment from reality (delusions), paranoia or hallucinations
- Inability to cope with daily problems or stress
- Trouble understanding and relating to situations and to people
- Alcohol or drug abuse
- Major changes in eating habits
- Sex drive changes
- Excessive anger, hostility or violence
- Suicidal thinking
- Sometimes symptoms of a mental health disorder appear as physical problems, such as stomach pain, back pain, headache, or other unexplained aches and pains.

Understand how mental illness affects a person's everyday life

“A mental illness is a condition that affects a person's thinking, feeling or mood. Such conditions may affect someone's ability to relate to others and function each day. Each person will have different experiences, even people with the same diagnosis.”

Mental illness can affect people in many ways but there are some general symptoms you can expect:

- Behavior:
- Thinking
- Mood
- Perception
- Social withdrawal

**As with many physical health conditions,
living with a mental illness may have
affects on other areas of your life including;**

- Your Physical health**
- Your Work**
- Education**
- Housing**
- Driving**
- Parenting & children**
- Holidays**
- Spirituality**

Section 3 (15 min):

How we can help ourselves and others?

Objectives

By the end of this section you will be able to:

- **Identify ways to promote good mental health and well-being in yourself and others.**
- **understand how to offer emotional and practical support to others.**
- **Understand ways you can break down mental health stigmas.**
- **Have resources to bring to your units and girls to help them improve their well-being.**

Section 3 activity:

Travel size Zen Garden (5min)

Identify ways to promote good mental health and well-being in yourself and others.

- Helping people to feel included
- Taking ownership of your life experiences and not blaming your situation on events beyond your control
- Eating well, drinking water, and exercising
- Creating and monitoring safe play areas for children
- Being accepting of changes in your environment, such as: a new job, changing schools, going through a divorce, the death of a loved one, being diagnosed with an illness.
- Identifying and realizing your goals (self-efficacy)
- At all stages of life, you can build resilience and skills to help improve or maintain positive mental health. You can do this by participating in:

Classes, school-based programs, anti-bullying campaigns: that teach children respect, tolerance and empathy seniors' walking, swimming and social groups, bereavement groups if you have experienced a death in your life, counseling for help if needed.

Promoting positive mental health in Children

- **Surroundings that are safe and secure**
- **Play opportunities with other children**
- **Unconditional love**
- **Confidence and self-esteem**
- **Guidance and discipline**

Break down mental health stigmas

- Talk Openly About Mental Health
- Educate Yourself and Others
- Be Conscious of Language
- Encourage Equality Between Physical and Mental Illness
- Show Compassion for Those with Mental Illness
- Choose Empowerment Over Shame
- Be Honest About Treatment
- Don't Harbor Self-Stigma

“No matter how you contribute to the mental health movement, you can make a difference simply by knowing that mental illness is not anyone’s fault, no matter what societal stigma says. You can make a difference by being and living Stigma Free.”

Ways You Can Improve Your Mental Health

- Tell yourself something positive.
- Write down something you are grateful for.
- Focus on one thing (in the moment).
- Exercise.
- Eat a good meal.
- Open up to someone.
- Do something for someone else.
- Take a break.
- Go to bed on time.

Start today!

You have the power to take positive steps right now to improve your resilience and emotional health. Don't wait until you're in a crisis to make your mental health a priority. Besides, it is easier to form new habits when you are feeling strong. You can then implement those habits when you need them most. Pick something that resonates with you and try it. Then, try something else. Slowly putting in place routines, habits, and regular patterns will help you feel better through gradual change.



Miniature Zen Garden



We should all bring a touch of the garden indoors to create a relaxing, positive space. The Japanese practice of “Zen” means to be mindful. For us, a garden is the perfect way to bring the calmness and mindfulness into your day that helps us live a more patient and stress free life. Zen gardens may have begun in Japan, but you can make your own to enjoy indoors! They are meant to represent a small, simple version of a scene in nature. These DIY mini Zen gardens are so easy to make, are beautiful, and offer us the tranquility of a garden space even while sitting at our desk, or while zoning out on the sofa after work. Today everyone will create a garden that is customized to *your* meaning of “Zen”. It’s a very personal thing, harmony. Find your garden happy place in your mind, because that’s exactly where you want to go when creating your garden project!

Zen Garden

Step 1

Fill your container half way with sand. Give it a gentle shake to get the sand to settle evenly over the surface. Use the fork to push any grains of sand off the sides of the plate or bowl.

Step 2

Arrange your rocks. In traditional Zen gardens, the arrangement of stones is the most important part of the garden. In fact, there are very specific rules for stone arrangement in Japanese rock garden manuals. Place your stones mindfully with the best sides facing out. You can also place them randomly or in a specific pattern.

Step 3

Draw in your ripples. There's no right or wrong way to do this. Traditionally, the "raking" of the sand is supposed to look like water. The garden is meant to resemble a dry river. That's the great part about sand: if you don't like what you draw, it's just a simple shake to "erase" the pattern and start over.

Variations

Try swapping out the sand and rock colors for a different look. Draw swirls instead of lines. There are so many ways to personalize your Zen garden.

Q and A wrap up

(5 – 10 min depending on time)

- Thank you everyone for joining me today in learning more about mental health and well-being. I will now take a few minutes to answer the questions and concerns you have in the parking lot.
- Thank you again for participating in this session, I have included a evaluation form for you to comment on this session. Once filled out if you could leave on the table that would be appreciated.
- If you have any other questions or concerns that I didn't address here with you today you can find me around today or send me a email at the address provided in the handout package.

I hope you all enjoy the rest of your weekend and I truly appreciate all that you do in guiding and in helping girls to be everything she wants to be!

2 Stars & A Wish



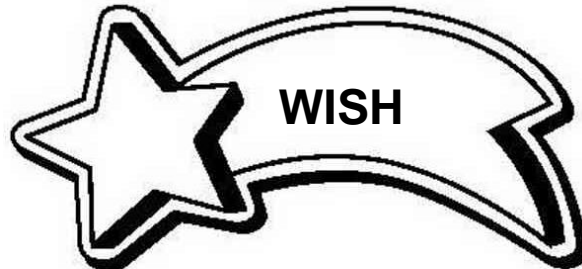
- I really like the way you....
- I enjoyed reading the part when....
- You did a great job....
- I noticed when

A large empty rectangular box with a black border, containing four small black dots on the left side, indicating a list of notes or observations.

- it was a smart idea to...
- It was interesting how...
- You grabbed my attention when...

A large empty oval shape with a black border, containing three small black dots on the left side, indicating a list of notes or observations.

- How do you feel about adding...
- Maybe you can come up with a better way to...
- What so you think about changing...
- A recommendation would be to
- How about....

A large empty hexagonal shape with a black border, containing five small black dots on the left side, indicating a list of notes or observations.