Fact Sheet

- Every year, one in five Canadians experience a mental illness. By the age of 40, half of Canadians will have experienced a mental health issue at some time during their life. (Canadian Mental Health Association)

- Mental illness causes approximately half a million Canadians to miss work every week, and costs our country $51 billion every year in health care costs and lost productivity. (Centre for Addiction and Mental Health)

- An estimated 3.2 million young Canadians between the ages of 12 and 19 are at risk of developing depression. (Canadian Mental Health Association)

- Only about one in five Canadian children who need mental health services receive them. (Canadian Mental Health Association)

- Every year, 1.6 million Canadians say their mental health care needs are not being met. (Canadian Mental Health Association)

- Canadian governments spend only 7 percent of their health care budgets on mental health services. (Canadian Mental Health Association)

- Canadians spend $950 million every year on mental health counselling services—30 percent of which is paid out of their own pockets. (Canadian Mental Health Association)

Key Terms

- Patient-driven—A model for health care where patients are viewed as equal partners and collaborators in determining how their health issues are managed, and physicians act as colleagues and advisors.

- At-risk demographic—A specific group of people, defined by a common factor like age range, ethnicity or gender, whose members have a significantly higher chance of experiencing particular physical or mental health challenges.

- Schizophrenia—A serious chronic mental health condition where individuals may suffer a wide range of problems like attention, focusing and memory issues, and may lose touch with reality through delusions or hallucinations.
Classroom Activity - Grades 7 to 12

Essential Question:

► Why is it important to understand your own mental well-being?
► What role can technology play in mental well-being?

Learning Goals:

Students will:

► Assess their own mental health and personal triggers
► Understand the services and solutions available to create better mental health
► Investigate the different online mental health apps and platforms and their effectiveness

Discussion:

1. Why are smartphones described as “nightmare rectangles”?
2. How can mobile mental health options offer solutions to patients?
3. What are the advantages and disadvantages of online mental health solutions?
4. Is a mental health app as effective as a professional help? Why or why not?
5. How can an individual assess the type of app that is best suited for them?

Warm Up (20 minutes)

Educator’s Note: The following activities will focus on mental well-being. You may have students in your classroom who are experiencing mental well-being challenges or know a person who has been affected by mental health issues. Ensure that all students feel comfortable and safe in the classroom environment and do not feel vulnerable or exposed. Consult your school guidance counsellor or student support worker to provide additional support to students during and after the activities.

As students enter the classroom, provide each student with an entry ticket and ask them to answer the following questions:

► How am I feeling?
► Which emotion is most prominent?
► When did I become aware of this feeling?
► Can I identify what caused this feeling?

Invite students who are comfortable to share their answers with the class.

As an alternative, show students the video “Perks of Being a Wallflower,” www.youtube.com/watch?v=n5rh7O4ICe0 (2:25). In pairs, ask students to think about the emotions that the characters are feeling. On the front board, list the feelings and emotions experienced by the characters. In their pairs, invite students to choose one emotion from the list and share a story or experience when they felt the same emotion.

On the front board, explore the Mental Health Meter, cmha.ca/mental-health-meter, as a class. Explain to students that there are many characteristics that make up good mental health and well-being. The Mental Health Meter is a personal assessment that aims to understand how different characteristics and the way you react in certain scenarios affects your overall mental well-being. This assessment does not provide a comprehensive understanding of one’s mental well-being, it is the beginning of the process.

As a class, discuss why the Mental Health Meter broke down the questions into the following categories: Ability to Enjoy Life, Resilience, Balance, Self-Actualization and Flexibility. Why are these categories indicative of mental well-being? Should other categories also be included in the assessment?

Individually, ask students to choose one of the categories where they want to improve their own mental well-being. Ask students to write a response about why they believe improvement in this category will contribute to an improvement in their overall mental well-being.

Investigate and Learn (2 x 60 minutes)

Show students the video “Promoting Mental Health,” www.youtube.com/watch?v=KLswi_4yRaE (6:01). Before showing students the video, place the following questions on the front board for students to think about while watching the video.

Questions:

• What is the difference between mental health and mental illness? What is the relationship between mental health and mental illness?
• Why is mental health and well-being an important part of our overall health?
• How can you promote mental health in your community?
• How do you respond to challenges in your environment? What strategies do you use? How did you develop these strategies?
• Do you agree or disagree with the statement “No health without mental health”? Why or why not?

As a class or in small groups, read the article “Can Mobile Mental Health Apps Turn Your Life Around?” Place chart paper with the discussion questions around the classroom and provide each student with a marker. Invite students to respond to the questions individually or in pairs. Encourage them to reflect on the article and their own perspective and use of tech apps to respond to the questions.
Educator’s Note: In the following activity, students will be assessing the effectiveness and relevance of a mobile application using a SWOT Analysis. A SWOT Analysis is a technique for understanding your strengths and weaknesses, and for identifying opportunities and threats.

Explain to students that there are many mental health apps in circulation and it is hard to know which application will positively contribute to an individual’s mental well-being. In small groups, ask students to conduct a SWOT Analysis of one mental health application. Encourage students to test the application to assess the quality of the app, and research user reviews and feedback. Provide each group with Blackline Master 1: Mental Health App SWOT Analysis as a reference guide and computer or tablet with Internet access.

Mental health app options:

- Calm—Reduce anxiety, improve sleep and make you feel happier.
- Headspace—Mindfulness and meditations
- Moodpath—Supports you through difficult times by assessing mood and well-being
- Superbetter—Game focusing on increasing resilience
- 7 Cups—Provides online therapy and emotional support
- Happify—Space to overcome negative thoughts
- Talkspace—Counselling and therapy app that connects users with a convenient, affordable and confidential way to deal with anxiety, stress, depression, relationship issues and chronic illness.

After each group has completed their SWOT Analysis, ask them to present it to the class. Ask each group to make a conclusion about the app’s usability. Would they recommend this app to a friend, family member or other person based on their analysis? Why or why not?

Dive Deeper

In the previous activity, students conducted an analysis of a mental well-being app and considered its strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. Using this knowledge, encourage students to design their own mental well-being app that will provide an avenue to develop skills and strategies a person can use to maintain positive mental well-being.

Ask students to create small groups and provide each group with Blackline Master 2: Designing My App, chart paper and markers, and a tablet or computer with Internet access. In their groups, ask students to design a mobile application that:

- Provides strategies to improve mental well-being through questions and scenarios; or
- Provides online support to individuals who want to have better mental health

Ask students to consider the following questions in their design process and draw the individual screens for their mobile application.

Questions:

Content:

- What is the purpose of the app? What are we trying to achieve?
- Who is the target audience?
- What information will be available on the app?
- Does my audience need any pre-existing knowledge to make the app accessible?
- Are there any possible negative consequences of the app? How will the individual be supported?

Design:

- Will the app be a survey, an online support system, a game or a place to get information?
- What will the layout of the application look like?
- What colours or theme will be used? How will this affect the user experience?
- Will there be a security or sign-in process?

After students have created their application, invite students to present this to the school or local community in a gallery walk. Encourage students to outline the purpose of the application, how it will benefit the user by helping to develop positive mental well-being and why it is important to think about one’s own mental well-being every day.

As an alternative, host a panel discussion. Invite mental health professionals and mobile app designers to the school to review and provide feedback about student designs. Ask students to present their mental health app design to the panel in a three-minute presentation and have the panel provide feedback to students about the potential success and challenges about the content and design.

Additional Websites

- Canadian Mental Health Association: www.cmha.ca
- Not Myself Today: www.notmyselftoday.ca/home
- Living Works: www.livingworks.net
- Mental Health.gov: www.mentalhealth.gov
- National Institute of Mental Health: www.nimh.nih.gov/index.shtml
- National Alliance on Mental Health: www.nami.org

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- National Institute of Mental Health: www.nimh.nih.gov/index.shtml
- National Alliance on Mental Health: www.nami.org
Blackline Master 1: Mental Health App SWOT Analysis

Questions:

- What is the purpose of the app?
- What relevant information and support does it provide?
- Who is the target audience?
- Are there advertisements? Who are they targeting?
- Is there a cost associated with the app?
- What security features are provided? Does the app require the sharing of personal or confidential information?
- Is the app easy to use?
- Is the design visually pleasing?
- Is the app effective? How do you know?

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Blackline Master 2: Designing My App

Use the following design template and questions to outline the content and layout for your mental well-being app.

What is the purpose of the app? What are we trying to achieve?

Who is the target audience? How will we market the app to them?

What information will be available on the app? Where are we sourcing this information from?

Research information and sources