



# Healthy Transitions

Promoting Resilience and Mental Health in Young Adolescents



April 2024

## Acknowledgements

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# Healthy Transitions

## Healthy Transitions Program Overview

### Program objectives

Healthy Transitions is designed to support the transition to high school and promote mental health in young adolescents, by:

- identifying youth with potentially serious mental health problems and linking them to appropriate services;
- helping youth develop knowledge, skills and attitudes important for mental health and resilience (program delivery);
- enhancing environments supportive of healthy adolescent development (at school and at home, teacher and parent/guardian supports); and
- strengthening links between schools and community organizations.

### Program facilitators and program delivery

While we intended to have Healthy Transitions provided to students in school, we have tried to avoid making it too much like school. With this in mind, we have developed activities that are fun and interactive and designed for small groups of students (12-15 students per group). Each group of 12-15 students is led by two facilitators (usually a teacher, Child and Youth Counsellor [CYC], or Social Worker [SW]).

- The activities don't work as well with more than 15 students (or with less than 11 or 12). Groups of 12-15 create a 'critical mass' for group work, while still promoting meaningful participation. This also makes it easier for facilitators to get to know individual students.
- Having two facilitators ensures that sessions run smoothly; one facilitator can focus on the session's activities, while the other is available for classroom management, to support individual students, and ensure that students receive follow up if indicated.

While the content of this program is intended to focus on mental wellness to prepare for the transition to high school, some students may be triggered by the content and disclose information re: mental health and/or safety concerns. Please refer to [Confidentiality and duty to report](#) for follow-up procedures to student disclosures.

Key messages:

- We have some control over our mental health and well-being.
- We need to take care of our mental health the way we take care of our physical health.
- There are ways of thinking, as well as actions we can take, that can promote mental health (help us feel better and cope with everyday struggles).

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- The way we think about things influences our feelings and actions
- We can change the way we feel and act, if we first change the way we think.
- It's OK to feel sad, upset and angry in certain situations. Sometimes trying to change the way we think about things can help, but sometimes situations and feelings are just too overwhelming for us to handle alone. At times like these, we need to get help (just as we would if we were feeling physically sick or had been physically injured).

## Organizing classrooms

This is a very important consideration and requires advance planning. We recommend that two facilitators provide a session for one group of 12-15 students. The sessions are activity based and can become chaotic with larger numbers. This means that the average class is divided into two groups, so that a second classroom or other 'venue' is needed.

Consider alternate spaces for location. As the classroom is a busy room with a lot of furniture, consider reserving the library, gym or forum for a session if possible. This will allow for chairs to be arranged in a circle format for discussion, ensuring inclusion and open flowing conversation.

It is also important to consider 'group composition'. Think about the potential group dynamics, and consider assigning students to groups ahead of time. Teachers and school administrators are essential in this process. Some things to consider when assigning students to groups:

- Ensure a mix of students of different identities (e.g., gender, ethnicity, students with exceptionalities, etc.);
- Friendships ('cliques' can be a problem, although many friends participate well in groups—it all depends on your students); and
- Be mindful of student backgrounds and history of group dynamics when assigning group scenarios or discussing certain topics (e.g., previous conflict or disagreement between students).

## Student handouts

Decide on a designated spot for students to keep all handouts such as their Health binder or folder.

# Healthy Transitions

## Ground rules

It is important to develop ground rules with each group, so that everyone in the group feels comfortable participating. Suggest a few ground rules, and then ask for additional ones from the group. If you like, you can record all ground rules on flip chart paper and post it during each session.

## Suggested ground rules

- All group members treat each other with respect (no put downs, hurtful jokes...).
- Information shared in the group is kept private by all members.
- Students make an effort to participate in the activities and are open to working in groups with all students.
- Students listen while someone else is talking.
- Students bring their sense of humour and try to have fun!

## Resources/materials

All materials required are listed at the beginning of each session and will require some preparation from facilitators prior to the session (for example, printing, prepping cut-outs, etc.).

During session one, facilitators are to show the Boundin' clip which is located on Disc 2 of The Incredibles DVD. Copies of The Incredibles DVD can be borrowed from your school board's resource library or located online through a school Disney + account (if applicable).

## Confidentiality and duty to report

Confidentiality is an essential ingredient of Healthy Transitions. It is vital to review the limits of confidentiality with students.

Students must be reminded that although information shared during group sessions will be kept confidential, facilitators have the duty to report to proper professionals if students reveal that:

- they are hurting themselves;
- they intend to hurt themselves;
- someone is hurting them; and
- they intend to hurt someone else.

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It may be helpful to identify students who may benefit from extra support and/or monitoring to the school CYC, Social Worker or principal, but further details should not be given. These may be students who may:

- be experiencing a number of life stressors;
- report difficulty coping;
- report feeling stressed, worried, angry or sad quite often; and
- have few resources.

These broad reasons for bringing students to the attention of school staff may be shared. Facilitators must follow their discipline specific ethical guidelines (for example, CYCs), as well as provincial regulations governing children and youth.

## Follow up and referral of students

Immediate, individual follow up is required for every student who:

- reports self-injurious thoughts and/or behaviours;
- discloses physical, sexual, and/or emotional abuse;
- demonstrates serious emotional distress, for example, crying, emotional volatility, extreme withdrawal, or high agitation, during group sessions; and
- expresses an interest in speaking with supports.

### Note

Please consult your school board's protocol for following up with students on disclosures regarding mental health concerns and duty to report under the *Child, Youth and Family Services Act*.

## Parent/guardian and student information letters

The parent/guardian letter on page 9 is a template that can be adapted for your school.

Plan to send home the information letter for parents/guardians about two weeks before you intend to start Healthy Transitions. This will ensure parents/guardians are informed of the purpose, format and key messages of the program and allow adequate time for them to connect with the teacher if they have any questions or concerns about the program.

At the same time, the student information letter can be used to share the program details with students. A hard copy does not need to be provided.



# Healthy Transitions

## Letter of information for parents/guardians about the Healthy Transitions program

Dear Parent/Guardian,

Your child and their class will be receiving the Healthy Transitions program as part of their grade 8 Health & Physical Education class starting [insert date] and will run over the course of four weeks. Healthy Transitions is a mental health promotion program to support the transition to high school for young adolescents, their parents/guardians and teachers. The program was developed by the Child and Youth Health Network for Eastern Ontario (CHEO) and has been adapted to fit our Halton Region community.

During the program, your child will learn about:

- bouncing back from setbacks;
- talking to parents/guardians, friends and teachers;
- coping/handling feelings, worries and stress; and
- how and where to get help if needed.

The grade 8 teacher in collaboration with the [insert supporting facilitator, e.g., Child and Youth Counsellor, Social Worker] will deliver the Healthy Transitions program. The program meets expectations from the education curriculum.

There is a parent/guardian portion to the Healthy Transitions program as well. You are encouraged to visit the following resources:

- [Insert link to school board well-being or mental health resources webpage]
- Halton Region - [Parenting Teens](#) web page on [halton.ca](http://halton.ca) for information to promote mental health and emotional well-being with your child(ren).
- School Mental Health Ontario - [Parents and caregivers](#) to learn about children's mental health.
- Ottawa Public Health – [Have that talk](#) series of mental health YouTube videos.

By talking about mental health openly, you can help your child become a healthy and resilient adult.

We look forward to providing the program to your child. If you have any questions, or would like additional information, please contact your child's classroom teacher.

Thank you in advance.

Sincerely,

\_\_\_\_\_  
Classroom Teacher

\_\_\_\_\_  
[name of supporting facilitator]

# Healthy Transitions

## Information for students

This information is to be shared with the class two weeks prior when the Information for parents/guardians is sent home. You do not need to provide a hard copy.

**Healthy Transitions** is a mental health promotion program for grade 8 students that supports the transition to high school.

### The program will help you learn about:

- bouncing back from setbacks, handling everyday struggles;
- talking to your parents/guardians, friends and teachers;
- handling feelings, worries and stress; and
- how and where to get help if needed.

### How will it work?

- Groups will be co-facilitated by the following: teachers, child and youth counsellors and/or social workers.
- Classes may be divided into smaller groups of 12-15 students.
- Groups will meet for about an hour, once a week for four weeks.

### What will happen in the groups?

There will be group activities and discussion about:

- handling everyday struggles;
- stories about mental health challenges;
- positive ways to express yourself and talk to others;
- coping with problems, worries and stress; and
- how to get help if needed.

If you have any questions about the program, you can ask your teacher. Note: Some of the content covered in this program may be triggering for some students so it's important to speak with a trusted adult such as a parent/guardian, teacher or CYC if you have any questions or concerns.

Advise students of additional services available to them, if needed:

- [kidshelpphone.ca](http://kidshelpphone.ca)
- [onestoptalk.ca](http://onestoptalk.ca) and
- [School Mental Health Ontario - Students page](#)

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## Optional energizers

Energizers are quick, fun activities to liven up a group. They are particularly useful after a meal, when groups may be getting sluggish or late in the day when energy is waning and motivation is decreasing<sup>1</sup>.

Below are six energizers you may want to use at a half-way point during each Healthy Transitions session. These are optional and can be used depending on the group and its needs. (Please note: if using an energizer, the session time will increase.)

### Friendly Fliers<sup>2</sup>

**Time: 15-20 minutes**

**Materials needed: Pens, blank paper**

**Notes: Minimal set-up**

**Rules:**

- The facilitator splits the group into pairs and asks each pair to make a paper airplane using their non- dominant hand.
- After making the plane, each pair writes a few characteristics (e.g. funny, curious, helpful) that define them on its wings.
- Each pair launches their plane from a designated spot to see which flies the farthest.
- The plane that flies the farthest wins.
- Starting with the plane that travels farthest, the facilitator reads out the characteristics on each plane's wings, and the group must try to guess which pair built each plane.

### Rock, Paper, Scissors, Lizard, Spock<sup>3</sup>

**Time: 10 minutes**

**Materials needed: None**

**Notes: Have picture/rules below up on screen or write on blackboard.**

**Rules:**

- The game is an expansion on the game Rock, Paper, Scissors.
- Each player picks a variable and reveals it at the same time.
- The winner is the one who defeats the others.
- In a tie, the process is repeated until a winner is found.

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- Students are to pair up and compete in a best of three competitions.
- The winners then go through to the next round and compete against the other winners.
- At the end there should be one victorious winner.
- Winners of each match up are listed below:
  - Scissors cuts Paper
  - Paper covers Rock
  - Rock crushes Lizard
  - Lizard poisons Spock
  - Spock smashes Scissors
  - Scissors decapitates Lizard
  - Lizard eats Paper
  - Paper disproves Spock
  - Spock vaporizes Rock
  - (and as it always has) Rock crushes Scissors.

## A-Z Time Crunch

**Time: 20 minutes**

**Materials Needed: Flipchart paper, marker**

**Notes: Minimal Set-up**

### Rules:

- Split students into groups of 4-5 students.
- Prepare flipchart papers for each group by writing the alphabet vertically in one or two columns (this can be done before) and give one flipchart and markers to each group.
- Students are given the theme of “Positive Mental Health” and must write words related to this theme beside each letter of the alphabet. For example: A-art, B-biking, C-colouring, D-deep breathing, E-exercise...T-therapist, Z-zinnia flower.
- Teams are given 3 minutes to complete the alphabet.
- Each team should select one student to present their words to the group.
- One point is awarded for each word that is not repeated by any other team.
- Words that are repeated by any other team are not awarded any points.
- After all teams have shared, the team with the most points wins.

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## Musical Islands

**Time: 10 minutes**

**Materials Needed: 10 pieces of 8 ½” x 11” paper of different colours, music**

**Notes: Requires an open space**

### Rules:

- Spread out pieces of paper on the floor.
- Each piece of paper represents an island and the area around is water.
- Play music (any song) for 20-30 seconds while students walk around the room.
- Students are not allowed to hover/wait around an island. They MUST walk around the whole space.
- Once the music stops, they must find an island to stop on.
- Two or three students can land on an island however, no body parts may be on the floor.
- If they are standing on one leg, they must be balanced.
- Students that do not find a spot on an island are out.
- Remove two islands before playing music again.
- Repeat by removing two islands at a time.
- When there are only two islands left, remove one.
- There can be two winners.

## Where the West Wind Blows<sup>4</sup>

**Time: 10-15 minutes**

**Materials Needed: Chairs**

**Notes: Requires an open space, fun, enjoyed by all ages**

### Rules:

- Chairs are arranged in a circle.
- There is one less chair than there are people.
- One person stands in the middle and says their name, followed by a statement that says something about them.
- Each statement begins with: “The West wind blows for anyone who...”
- Example: “My name is Greg. The West wind blows for anyone who has a sister.”

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- Anyone with a sister must jump up and switch chairs with someone else.
- Players cannot move to a chair directly beside them.
- After each round, there will always be someone left in the center. This person begins the next round by introducing themselves and then saying, “The West wind blows for anyone who...”.

### Animal Round-Up<sup>5</sup>

**Time: 10-15 minutes**

**Materials Needed: None**

**Notes: Open space required**

**Rules:**

- Tell students to silently think of their favourite animal.
- Students can only make gestures and the noise of their animal.
- Without talking, tell them to arrange themselves from largest to smallest animal.
- After they have finished, have students go around and say the name of their animal to see if they are in the correct place in line.



## Session 1: Thoughts, Feelings, Actions – How we react and rebound

Grade 8		Session 1 – Curriculum Expectations	
		Personal Skills: 1.1, 1.2	
		Creative and Critical Thinking: 1.5	

# Healthy Transitions

## Let's get prepared!

1. Borrow a copy of The Incredibles 2 disc set (resource library)—you'll need disc 2, select 'Boundin' on this disc or locate the 'Boundin' clip through a school Disney + account if applicable.
2. Print session handouts:
  - [Thoughts, feelings and actions wall signs](#) (laminates if you wish to protect against the wear and tear of repeated use);
  - ['Thoughts, Feelings, Actions: Change one and you can change them all'](#) handout;
  - [Rebounding in real life discussion guide](#); and
  - [Biographies](#).

## Key messages for the session

- Our thoughts, feelings and actions influence each other.
- If we change the way we think about things, we can change how we feel and act.
- There are ways of thinking about things, and actions we can take that can help us feel better, and help us to handle everyday struggles.
- For general everyday situations, it's OK to feel badly when difficult things happen, but at some point, we have to move forward. Sometimes trying to change the way we think about the situation will help, but sometimes the situation and our feelings are too overwhelming, and we need to get help and support from others.

Note: This is for the person's own coping and does not remove the injustice or need for societal change (e.g. experience of racism or discrimination, trauma, etc.)

- The support of others is essential to 'rebounding'.
- It's important to note that some challenges can be lifelong and may require many phases of rebounding.

## Session outline

10 minutes: Introduction & ground rules

5 minutes: Warm up activity: Stand up/hands up

10 minutes: Focus on thoughts, feelings and actions

25 minutes: Rebounding in real life



# Healthy Transitions

## Introduction (10 minutes)

1. Establish [ground rules](#) with the group (see Section 1 Healthy Transitions Program Overview).
2. Introduce facilitators and describe the Healthy Transitions program for students, explaining that the groups will meet once each week for four weeks.

During the sessions, students will learn about:

- talking with friends, parents/guardians and teachers;
  - handling everyday struggles, feelings, worries and stress;
  - solving problems;
  - taking care of our mental health; and
  - how and where to get help if needed.
3. Ask the students, 'What is mental health?' After short discussion, provide the following definition:
    - Mental health is defined as a state of well-being in which every individual realizes their own potential, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively, and are able to make a contribution to their community<sup>6</sup>.

## Warm up activity: Stand up/hands up (5 minutes)

### Objectives

Learners will feel more comfortable participating in the session.

### Activity

1. Ask students to stand up or raise their hand if the following statements apply to them, and to sit down/lower hand if the statements do not apply. If you wish, invite students to offer their own 'statements'.

Stand up/hands up if you...	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Are left handed?</li><li>• Have siblings?</li><li>• Learned a new skill in the past year?</li><li>• Like to cook?</li><li>• Have a birthday in the summer?</li><li>• Have felt many feelings at the same time (Angry/sad; excited/nervous)?</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Like spicy food?</li><li>• Have tried something new, even when you were nervous?</li><li>• Like hot weather?</li><li>• Have a pet?</li><li>• Have been angry with someone, then when you heard their side of the story, weren't so angry anymore?</li></ul>

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## Focus on thoughts, feelings and actions (10 minutes)

### Objectives

Learners will:

1. Appreciate the interrelatedness of thoughts, feelings and action.
2. Accept that changing the way we think about things can change the way we feel and act.

### Structure

Video clip and group discussion.

### Activity

1. Show 'Boundin' clip (see [Let's Get Prepared](#)).
2. Distribute the Thoughts, Feelings & Actions handout. Tape the Thoughts, Feelings and Actions wall signs on the board or flip chart, so there will be space to record under each header. Try to arrange them in a triangle (as in the handout), so it will be easier to illustrate the inter-relatedness of thoughts, feelings and actions.

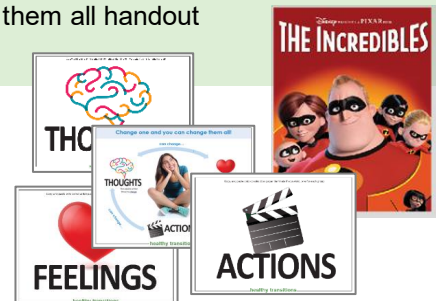
3. Ask students:

What were the little sheep's thoughts, feelings and actions:

- Before he was sheared?
  - Right after he was sheared?
  - After he met the Jack-o-lope and started bounding?
  - After he was sheared for the 2nd time?
4. Record responses (or use a volunteer recorder) on the board or flip chart paper, under the appropriate heading.
  5. Facilitate a discussion about how the little sheep's thoughts influenced his feelings and actions. Once he started thinking differently, he felt and acted differently. Note how an action (bounding) made him feel good, and this influenced how he felt and thought. Because the 'bounding' made him feel good, he kept doing it.

### Materials

- Disc 2 from The Incredibles 2 disc set (select "Boundin") or access through school Disney + account if applicable.
- DVD player;
- board or flip chart paper;
- tape;
- markers or chalk;
- Individual Thoughts, Feelings & Actions posters (copy headers, then cut and paste onto chalkboard – laminate if desired) and
- Thoughts, Feelings, Actions: Change one and you can change them all handout



Copy and paste onto construction paper (laminates if you wish), one for each group



# THOUGHTS

Copy and paste onto construction paper (laminates if you wish), one for each group



# FEELINGS

Healthy Transitions

Copy and paste onto construction paper (laminates if you wish), one for each group



# ACTIONS

# Change one and you can change them all!



# Healthy Transitions

## Rebounding in real life (25 minutes)

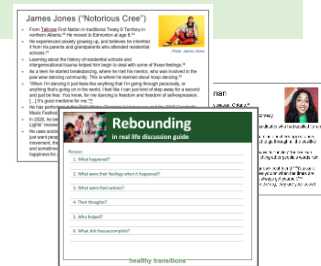
### Objectives

Learners will:

1. Outline how public figures were able to overcome personal struggles by considering the influences of thoughts, feelings, actions and support.
2. Appreciate the feelings public figures experienced when they were struggling.
3. Appreciate the importance of accepting our feelings when something difficult happens.
4. Recognize that positive self-talk can help people overcome obstacles.

### Materials

- Biography cards (copy from biography pages, and cut out/mount on construction paper & laminate if you wish); and
- Rebounding in real life discussion guide



### Structure

Small group work, larger group discussion.

### Activity

1. Ask students what they think 'rebounding' means. For this session, it means 'bouncing back' after a difficult time or a setback.
2. Break group into smaller groups of 3 or 4. This activity can also be completed in a larger group format. Hold biography cards face down, and have one member of each group select one. Distribute discussion guides to everyone (to keep in their Healthy Transitions folder), but have the group complete just one. Brief biographies have been developed for the following people:

- |                  |                                  |                        |
|------------------|----------------------------------|------------------------|
| • Clara Hughes   | • James Jones ("Notorious Cree") | • Matreyi Ramakrishnan |
| • Camila Cabello | • Dwayne "The Rock" Johnson      | • Serena Williams      |
| • Alessia Cara   | • Shawn Mendes                   | • Simone Biles Owens   |
| • Trevor Noah    | • Bella Ramsey                   | • Domee Shi            |
| • Ryan Reynolds  |                                  | • Wali Shah            |

**Note:** Some of the personal stories may include mention of Anti-Black racism, Islamophobia, sexism, bullying, verbal abuse, and body shaming. Advise students that some biographies may include difficult topics and to seek support from teacher or CYC if needed.

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3. Ask students to review the bio together and to complete the discussion guide. Suggest that one person read the bio aloud to the group, and one person be the recorder for the group. Circulate to assist groups as needed.
4. Have a representative of each group report back. Summarize what each group has presented reinforcing:
  - The effects that thoughts (self talk), feelings and actions have on each other.
  - Positive self talk enabled the person to meet challenges (perhaps ask about the possible results of negative self talk).
  - ‘Feedback loop’—the action feels good, person gets ‘rewards’, keeps on going.
  - It’s OK to feel badly when something ‘bad’ happens, but at some point all these people were able to move forward. This is for the person’s own coping and does not remove the injustice/need for societal change (e.g. experiences of racism or discrimination, trauma, etc.)
  - The role of supportive people in the successes of these public figures.
5. Conclude by saying that we are all faced with difficulties, and sometimes they are too much for us to handle alone. Remember that the people discussed in the biographies could never have met their goals without support. During difficult times, it’s important to make sure that we get the support we need. Advise students of additional services available to them, if needed:
  - [kidshelpphone.ca](http://kidshelpphone.ca)
  - [onestoptalk.ca](http://onestoptalk.ca) and
  - [School Mental Health Ontario - Students page](#)
6. Optional: If time is available, ask students how they or someone close to them has ‘rebounded’ after a difficult time. Prompt students as needed with the following situations (“Has anyone ever ....?”):
  - Learned or tried something new?
  - Handled a difficult situation?
  - Started in a new school (or city, or province, or country)?
  - Made a mistake?
  - Forgiven someone?

Alternately, you can ask students to think about rebounding for ‘homework’, and can share this with the group at the next session.



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## Biographies

Print, cut and paste separately on paper. Laminate individually if you wish.

### Clara Hughes



- Born September 27, 1972, in Winnipeg, Manitoba.<sup>6</sup>
- She is a Canadian cyclist and speed skater and the only athlete in history to win multiple medals in both Summer and Winter Games.<sup>6</sup>
- After winning her first two medals in the 1996 Atlanta Olympics, Hughes' began experiencing symptoms of depression. She described feeling unmotivated, trouble getting out of bed, intentionally isolating herself, and crying a lot.<sup>7</sup>
- She pursued professional help, sought support from friends and family, and made lifestyle changes to her eating and sleeping habits to improve her physical and mental health.<sup>7,8</sup>
- Currently the National Spokesperson for Bell's "Let's Talk" mental health campaign. Clara shares her personal struggles with depression, in efforts to reduce stigmas associated with mental illness.<sup>6</sup>
- "Clara's Big Ride for Bell Let's Talk" started in March 2014. An annual cross-country bike ride, intended to promote mental health awareness in communities across Canada.<sup>9</sup>
- "I am so grateful to have this chance to give the voice to Canadians from coast to coast to coast, to shout it loud and clear, that this is an issue that affects every single one of us—if not us, it's someone that is close to us," Hughes said at a news conference.<sup>10</sup>

### Camila Cabello



- Born on March 3, 1997, in Havana, Cuba.<sup>11</sup>
- She was a part of the group Fifth Harmony, which had success with singles "Miss Movin' On" and "Worth It." As a solo artist, she has collaborated with artists such as Shawn Mendez, Machine Gun Kelly, Pit Bull, Cashmere Cat, and Young Thug. She is known for singles such as "Havana," "Crying in the Club" and "Never Be the Same."<sup>12</sup>
- She has spoken openly about her struggles with anxiety and obsessive-compulsive disorder.<sup>13</sup>
- "There was something hurting inside me, and I didn't have the skill to heal it or handle it. In order to heal it, I had to talk about it."<sup>14</sup>
- "I tried a lot of different things, different kinds of therapy, meditation, exercise, changing the way I eat, definitely changing the way I schedule my time and making sure that there's balance, that I have time for friendships and connection with people."<sup>15</sup>
- She shares that in the Latin community, there is stigma about talking about mental health, and challenges are seen as "weak." This is why she has become vocal about her experiences.<sup>16</sup>

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## Shawn Mendes

- Born August 8, 1998, in Pickering, Ontario.<sup>17</sup>
- He began to build a following in 2013, when he posted song covers on a video sharing platform and quickly rose to fame.<sup>17</sup>
- He began touring at the age of 15 and shared that while he loved performing, life on the road was very intense and there were times that he felt like he was either “flying or drowning.”<sup>18</sup>
- He recorded and released the song “In My Blood” in 2018 and the lyrics are about his own personal experience with anxiety.<sup>18</sup>
- In July 2022, he revealed that he needed to postpone several of his tour dates in order to look after his mental health.<sup>20</sup>
- He has shared what has helped him: “A lot of doing therapy, a lot of trying to understand how I was feeling and what was making me feel that way,” he said. “And then doing the work to help myself and heal. And also leaning on people in my life to help a little bit.”<sup>19</sup>
- He added that, “Therapy is what works for you. Therapy is climbing a mountain. Therapy is [...] talking to a therapist to music and running on the treadmill, therapy is going to dinner with your friends—it's something that distracts you, that helps you heal and so it just depends on what you think therapy is. I made a conscious effort to be more connected to the people in my life. I found I was closing myself off from everybody, thinking that would help me battle it then realizing the only way I was going to battle it was completely opening up and letting people in.”<sup>19</sup>



## Alessia Cara

- Born on July 11, 1996 in Mississauga, and grew up in Brampton.<sup>21</sup>
- She learned to play guitar at age 10 and began posting song covers on YouTube by age 13. Studying drama and theatre in school helped her become more comfortable singing in front of others.<sup>22</sup>
- She signed with EP Entertainment and Def Jam Records at the age of 18.<sup>21</sup>
- Best known for her songs “Here” and “Scars to Your Beautiful.”<sup>23</sup>
- In her album ‘In the Meantime,’ she writes about her struggles with mental health. She shares about experiences with anxiety, insomnia and feelings of loneliness, and how she has turned to family, friends and professionals for support. She also shares that she has come to terms with her insomnia and uses that time to write music.<sup>24</sup>
- “I started therapy a long time ago, and then I stopped for a while and I sort of neglected my mental health and neglected myself. And it wasn't until I got the proper help I needed through therapy and just making a bunch of changes in my lifestyle. [...] I also now take medication for my anxiety, which is wonderful. I think it's worked wonders for me and I wish it wasn't so stigmatized.”<sup>25</sup>
- She is the first Canadian to win the “Best New Artist” award at the Grammys.<sup>22</sup>



# Healthy Transitions

## Trevor Noah



- Born February 20, 1984 in Johannesburg, South Africa.<sup>26</sup>
- He was born to a Black mother and white father during apartheid when inter-racial marriage was illegal. To avoid suspicion or imprisonment, his family often kept him hidden or denied that he was a part of their family.<sup>26</sup>
- His memoir, *Born a Crime: Stories from a South African Childhood*, became a #1 New York Times Bestseller.<sup>27</sup>
- After years of working as a stand-up comedian, he was offered the position to replace Jon Stewart on The Daily Show. The choice was met with criticism, racism and hate. He says, "People didn't even know me and they hated the idea of me." It was his comedy and ability to connect politics to his experiences in South Africa that eventually won over audiences.<sup>28</sup>
- He has also spoken publicly about his experiences with depression and ADHD: "I think over the years, what I've come to learn, thanks to some great therapists, is my depression is created by a severe level of ADHD, [...] so for myself, it means that if I'm not careful in how I sleep, how I eat, [...] how I manage my routine I can become overwhelmed and it can just feel like the whole world is just too heavy to bear."<sup>28</sup>
- He uses the topic (ADHD) in his comedy to help destigmatize the disorder and spread awareness.<sup>29</sup>

## Ryan Reynolds



- Born on October 23, 1976, in Vancouver, BC and is the youngest of 4 brothers.<sup>30</sup>
- He said his father could be quite explosive and it made for at times a stressful home environment.<sup>31</sup>
- Despite having failed his high-school drama class, he has gone on to become an accomplished Hollywood actor with roles like The Green Lantern, Free Guy, Deadpool and he played the voice of Pikachu in Detective Pikachu.<sup>30</sup>
- He has been dedicated to philanthropy throughout his career and supports a number of different charities.<sup>30</sup>
- Being an accomplished and sought-after actor has not kept him from struggling with his mental health. "I have anxiety," Ryan explained in an interview "I've always had anxiety. [...] Both in the lighthearted, 'I'm anxious about this,' kind of thing," he continued, "and I've been to the depths of the darker end of the spectrum, which is not fun."<sup>31</sup>
- Ryan has shared that he uses meditation and mindfulness to stay calm.<sup>31</sup>
- He wants to be a good role model for his kids and show them that all emotions are OK. "Part of it is that I have three daughters at home and part of my job as a parent is to model behaviors and model what it's like to be sad and model what it's like to be anxious, or angry. That there's space for all these things."<sup>32</sup>

# Healthy Transitions

## James Jones (“Notorious Cree”)



- From Tallcree First Nation in traditional Treaty 8 Territory in northern Alberta.<sup>33</sup> He moved to Edmonton at age 8.<sup>34</sup>
- He experienced anxiety growing up, and believes he inherited it from his parents and grandparents who attended residential schools.<sup>34</sup>
- Learning about the history of residential schools and intergenerational trauma helped him begin to deal with some of those feelings.<sup>34</sup>
- As a teen he started breakdancing, where he met his mentor, who was involved in the pow wow dancing community. This is where he learned about hoop dancing.<sup>34</sup>
- “When I’m dancing it just feels like anything that I’m going through personally, or anything that’s going on in the world, I feel like I can just kind of step away for a second and just be free. You know, for me dancing is freedom and freedom of self-expression. [...] It’s good medicine for me.”<sup>34</sup>
- He has performed at the 2010 Winter Olympics in Vancouver and the 2015 Coachella Music Festival. He also danced on tour with A Tribe Called Red for their world tour.<sup>35</sup>
- In 2020, he became known as Notorious Cree when his dance to the Weeknd’s “Blinding Lights” received over 2 million views on TikTok.<sup>35</sup>
- He uses social media to share his culture and teachings that were passed on to him: “I just want people to realize that they can heal in many different ways, whether it be movement, therapy, etc. I think it’s important to remember that we all deserve to be happy, and sometimes that happiness comes from doing what we love. Dance is a part of that happiness for me and I wanted to share that.”<sup>36</sup>

## Dwayne “The Rock” Johnson



- Born on May 2, 1972, in Hayward, California.<sup>37</sup>
- He is an American actor and former professional wrestler.<sup>37</sup>
- Some of his most known work includes *Fortnite*, *Jumanji* and *Moana*.<sup>37</sup>
- The first time he experienced depression was after suffering a devastating shoulder injury while playing football. He was 18 years old.<sup>38</sup>
- “I left school, but the interesting thing at the time is, I didn’t know what mental health was. I didn’t know what depression was. I just knew I didn’t want to be there.”<sup>38</sup>
- He had a couple of more bouts of depression throughout his life but was encouraged by his friends and family to seek out help and find the support he needed.<sup>38</sup>
- He states: “Asking for help is not a weakness. As a matter of fact, asking for help is our superpower, and men, especially us, we fall into this trap of being really averse to vulnerability, because we always want to be strong and feel like we can take on the world.”<sup>39</sup>
- He has expressed that we all need to pay attention to people in pain and “remind them they are not alone.”<sup>39</sup>

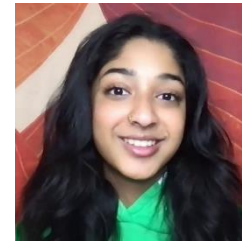
# Healthy Transitions

## Bella Ramsey



- Born September 25, 2003, in England.<sup>40</sup>
- Known for their debut role as Lyanna Mormont in Season 6 of HBO's *Game of Thrones*, and Ellie Williams in the *The Last of Us*.<sup>40</sup>
- Bella identifies as non-binary (gender fluid).<sup>41</sup>
- At age 18, Bella was diagnosed as being neurodivergent. They received a lot of support from co-star Pedro Pascal and director Craig Mazin.<sup>41</sup>
- In speaking about their anxiety, they say, "I never really was an anxious kid. [...] But I guess that got exacerbated as I started working in high-pressured environments."<sup>41</sup>
- They say that being neurodiverse has had a "massively" big impact on becoming an actor. "I don't know if I'd be an actor if it wasn't for that. One of my things is I'm very perceptive, sometimes too perceptive. I get paralysed because I just see everything – it takes me four hours to get round [the grocery store]."<sup>42</sup>
- They have also spoken about "masking" or concealing their neurodiverse traits. "I'm a pro-masker. It's quite exhausting being socially switched-on all the time. I switch on, and then I'm social and then... ah man. I need time to recover."<sup>43</sup>

## Maitreyi Ramakrishnan



- Born December 28, 2001, in Mississauga, Ontario.<sup>44</sup>
- She is Sri Lankan Tamil background.<sup>44</sup>
- Known for playing Devi Vishwakumar, in the Netflix teen comedy series *Never Have I Ever*.<sup>44</sup>
- In 2019, she was chosen by Mindy Kaling out of 15,000 candidates who had applied for an open casting call for the show.<sup>45</sup>
- As an actor, she has had to deal online trolls and body-shaming about her appearance, like having darker body hair on her arms. She says, "I used to go through all the positive comments until I landed on a negative one."<sup>46</sup>
- Now she no longer reads online comments and looks for ways to "unplug" for her own mental health. She says, "Don't give up the power . . . by letting other people's words ruin your day."<sup>46</sup>
- She also uses positive self-talk and talks about being "your own best friend." "You can't expect anyone else to do the heavy lifting for you and cheer you on when the times are rough because they might not always be there, but you've always got yourself."<sup>45</sup>
- She also says, "All those things you probably pick apart on the reg, they are your secret weapons."<sup>45</sup>

# Healthy Transitions

## Serena Williams

- Born Sept 26, 1981, in Saginaw, Michigan and is the youngest of 5 daughters.<sup>47</sup>
- She began training in tennis at the age of 3.<sup>47</sup>
- When she started out as a player, there was a lack of representation in tennis. “Growing up and playing these tournaments when I was younger ... I didn’t really see a lot of people that was my color — that was Black. So I think I just got used to it.”<sup>48</sup>
- Serena has won more Grand Slam singles titles than any other woman or man and is known as one of the greatest tennis players of all time.<sup>49</sup>
- Despite her successes, she has faced racism and sexism in her career and in her portrayal in media. She was scrutinized for her body shape, her musculature, and “aggressive” approach on the court, which are some of the negative stereotypes of Black women.<sup>50</sup>
- In spite of this, she has learned to see her body as “beautiful.” She says, “I can show [my daughter] that I struggled, but now I’m happy with who I am and what I am and what I look like.”<sup>51</sup>
- She has also been open about her experiences with managing anxiety and depression. She finds that talking things out helps a lot. “Talking things through with my mom, my sisters, my friends let me know that my feelings are totally normal.”<sup>52</sup>



## Simone Biles Owens

- Born in Columbus, Ohio on March 14, 1997.<sup>53</sup>
- Both of her parents struggled with alcoholism and drug addiction. She and her sister were adopted and raised by her grandparents.<sup>53</sup>
- She demonstrated her ability as a gymnast at a young age.<sup>53</sup>
- She went on to win 7 Olympic medals and was the first woman to capture five All-Around World Championship titles.<sup>54</sup>
- At the 2020 Tokyo Olympics, she faced tremendous pressure and found she couldn’t compete.<sup>55</sup>
- She made the brave decision to withdraw from competition and focus on her mental health and wellbeing.<sup>55</sup> She said at the time that she knew she needed to take a step back and “work on my mindfulness” and lean on the people who support her.<sup>56</sup>
- She went on to say “It’s really important to use that support system and know they’re there for you and not against you, because at the end of the day, us as humans, we hate asking for help. We think we can do it on our own, but sometimes we just can’t. So use every outlet given to you.”<sup>54</sup>
- By speaking up, she addressed the stigma about mental health in sports. She showed athletes that they don’t need to be strong all the time, and that mental health struggles do not make you any less of an athlete.<sup>57</sup>
- In 2022, she was awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom by President Joe Biden for her advocacy in mental health, the foster care system, and for victims of sexual assault.<sup>70</sup>



# Healthy Transitions

## Domee Shi

- Born on August 19, 1989, in Chongqing, China.<sup>58</sup> She immigrated to Toronto at age 2 and grew up in Scarborough.<sup>59</sup>
- As a child, she was shy and said she was sheltered by her parents. She felt pressure to make them proud. She worked hard in school and participated in several extracurricular activities.<sup>59</sup>
- “For me, and for a lot of kids from my background, we have this eternal mental struggle. We want to honour our parents and make them happy. There’s guilt and a sense of duty. But we’re also living in the West and exposed to all this culture that encourages you to be yourself, embrace yourself, find your voice.”<sup>59</sup>
- In middle school, she found friends who understood. “I was never the only Asian kid in my class, and I formed a tight circle of friends who were all immigrants like me.”<sup>59</sup>
- She is an animator, story-editor, and director. Best known for her work on movies *Turning Red*, *Inside Out* and short film, *Bao*.<sup>58</sup>
- She is the first woman, and the second person of Asian descent, to direct a Pixar film.<sup>60</sup>
- She admits having tension with her mother growing up, which inspired the mother-daughter relationship in the movie, *Turning Red*.<sup>60</sup>
- “I like to think that instead of going to therapy, I made this movie. I definitely think it brought me closer with my parents, especially my mom.”<sup>61</sup>
- “We never even talked about this sort of stuff, so I do feel like making the movie maybe started that baby step of a conversation of us unpacking our own relationship.”<sup>60</sup>



## Wali Shah

- Born September 9, 1994, in Pakistan, and immigrated to Toronto at age 3.<sup>62</sup>
- At age 9, his family moved to Mississauga, where he experienced bullying and discrimination for being Muslim.<sup>65</sup>
- Writing helped him work through his feelings. “I was always angry about stuff and I felt that if I wrote it down I would lose that anger.”<sup>64</sup>
- At age 15, he got into a fight. He was arrested in front of his mother and spent the night in jail, which was a turning point in his life. “I thought about how fortunate I was, and how I was not nearly as thankful as I should be for all the blessings in my life. [...] I made a genuine effort to be more open-minded, positive and proactive, to take charge of my life; but it was not something I could do alone.”<sup>62</sup>
- Shah used his experience of being arrested to inspire his first spoken word poem.<sup>63</sup>
- In grade 11, he says his law teacher “would spend her lunch hour talking to me [...] whenever I was having a bad day, mentoring me on how to better myself.” He also says that it was his English teacher who encouraged him to pursue poetry and share his story.<sup>62</sup>
- Shah is now a motivational speaker and poet. He has performed for former president Barack Obama, and collaborated with artists such as Kendrick Lamar.
- He is an active ambassador for the YMCA, the Bell Let's Talk Campaign, and has raised over one million dollars for United Way. In 2017, he was the recipient of the YMCA Peace Medal.<sup>67</sup>





# Rebounding

## in real life discussion guide

Person:

1. What happened?

2. What were their feelings when it happened?

3. What were their actions?

4. Their thoughts?

5. Who helped?

6. What did they accomplish?





## Session 2:

### Coping with Feelings and Stress – What we can do about it

Grade 8	Session 2 – Curriculum Expectations
	Personal Skills: 1.1, 1.2
	Interpersonal Skills: 1.4
	Creative and Critical Thinking: 1.5
	Substance Use, Addictions and Related Behaviours: C1.3
	Healthy Eating: C2.1
	Personal Safety and Injury Prevention: C2.2
	Substance Use, Addictions and Related Behaviours: C2.3

# Healthy Transitions

## Let's get prepared!

1. Assemble 8" x 11" paper (one sheet per student) and one marker per student
2. Print session handouts:
  - [Positive, Negative and Neutral/Time Out wall signs](#). Cut and paste onto construction paper, laminate if you wish;
  - [Reacting to Problems: Self Talk Can Change a Lot Worksheet](#) (one per student);
  - [Reacting to Problems: Self Talk Can Change a Lot Explosion Chart](#); and
  - [Learn to Chill handout](#) (one per student).
3. Print and cut out:
  - Human BINGO cards
  - [Light bulb cut outs](#) or sticky notes (at least one per student—have extras on hand); and
  - [Negative Thoughts/Positive Thoughts Scenarios](#) (paste onto construction paper if desired).

## Key messages for the session

- There are many different ways of looking at the same situation.
- If we change the way we think about things, we can change how we feel and act.
- There are ways of thinking about things, and actions we can take, that can help us feel better, and help us to handle our feelings and stress (more positive self talk, positive coping and learning to relax).

## Session outline

- 10 minutes: Human BINGO
- 15 minutes: Coping strategies
- 10 minutes: Learn to chill
- 15 minutes: Self talk

# Healthy Transitions

## Warm up activity: Human BINGO (10 minutes)

### Objectives

Students will be exposed to a variety of positive coping strategies.

### Structure

Large group activity

### Activity

1. Distribute the BINGO handout and tell students to select one of the two BINGO cards.
2. Tell the students to approach their classmates and ask if they fit one of the descriptions found on their square. If they do, get that person to sign their name in the square. If not, tell the students to move on to the next person.
3. Inform the students how they can win: one line, four squares or full signed card.
4. After students have returned to their seats, read the following on coping strategies:
  - There are ways of thinking about things, and actions we can take, that can help us feel better, and help us to handle our feelings. Some of the descriptions found on your BINGO cards are examples of positive coping strategies. Throughout this session, we will be learning about different ways to cope when you are feeling sad, angry or stressed.

Choose one of the two BINGO squares and approach other students in the room. Ask the person you are talking to if they fit the description found on one of the squares. If they do, get that person to sign their name in the square, if not, move on to the next person. Your facilitator will let you know how you can win!

<b>BINGO</b>		
Had cereal for breakfast	Likes to draw	Likes to play sports
Is left handed	Listens to music	Likes to take walks
Does yoga	Never been on a plane	Has a pet

<b>BINGO</b>		
Travelled overseas	Likes scary movies	Likes to cook or bake
Been to a concert	Has a younger sister	Met someone famous
Likes to read	Likes chocolate	Likes to dance

# Healthy Transitions

## Coping strategies (15 minutes)

### Objectives

Students will:

1. Appreciate the value of handling stress and strong feelings in a positive way.
2. Recognize positive, negative and neutral/time out coping strategies.

### Structure

Small group work, larger group discussion

### Activity

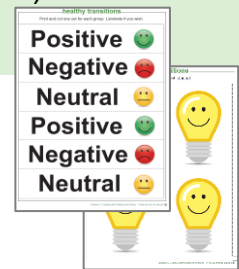
1. Distribute two or three light bulb cutouts or sticky notes to each student. Ask students to record 'What students their age do when they're feeling stressed, worried, sad or angry' onto the cut out (one 'coping activity' per cut out). Students should complete at least one. Provide more cutouts sticky notes as needed. Collect all completed notes as needed. Place aside.
2. Tape 'positive', 'negative' and 'neutral' coping wall signs to the wall or board. Define terms using definitions on next page.
3. Review each item, and ask students if the action represents positive, negative or neutral/time out coping. Tape the note under the appropriate 'coping' header. You may have a student volunteer assist with this.
4. Facilitate a brief discussion of each coping method described (use the definitions below to help), by asking students:
  - Why is this method positive/negative/neutral?
  - Would there be negative consequences to using this method?

If listening to music is mentioned as a coping strategy, ask students if the kind of music they listen to would make a difference (some music might make us feel better, but some music might make us feel worse).

Mention humour as a coping strategy if students do not.

### Materials

- Flip chart paper;
- Markers;
- Tape;
- 'Postive', 'negative', and 'neutral/time out' wall signs (print, cut and paste); and
- Light bulb cut outs or sticky notes (several per student).



# Healthy Transitions

5. Ask students about other coping strategies that may not have been mentioned (positive as well as negative). If students do not raise these points, remind them that talking to others (such as friends, family members, coaches, faith leaders, etc.), and getting help if needed are good strategies for coping with feelings and stress. Discuss any 'negative' coping strategies raised in terms of feeling better and consequences.
6. Remind students that relaxation is a positive coping strategy. Refer to [Learn to Chill](#) handout.
7. Remind students of the services available to them, if needed:
  - [kidshelpphone.ca](http://kidshelpphone.ca)
  - [onestoptalk.ca](http://onestoptalk.ca) and
  - [School Mental Health Ontario - Students page](#)

## Definitions for facilitators

### Positive coping

- Helps to restore emotional balance and/or feel better about yourself;
- Respectful of you, others and property; and
- Helps you to solve the problem.
- Examples: Talk to a friend or a parent/guardian, keep a journal, exercise.

### Negative coping

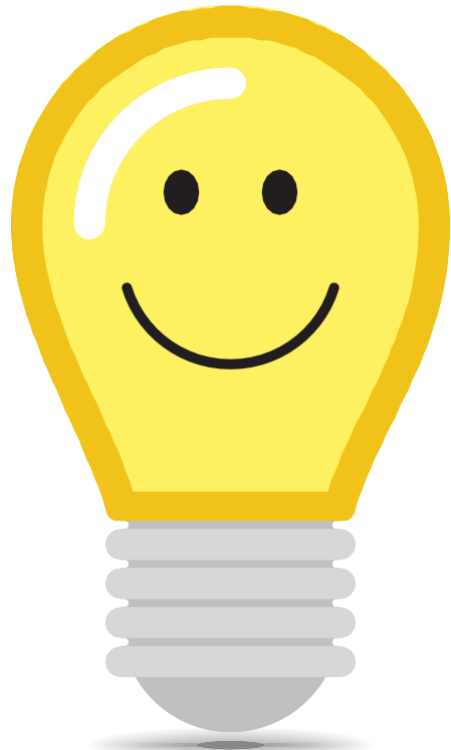
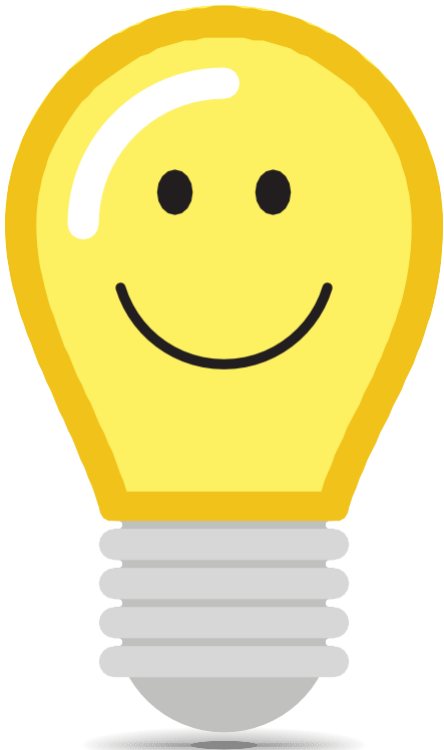
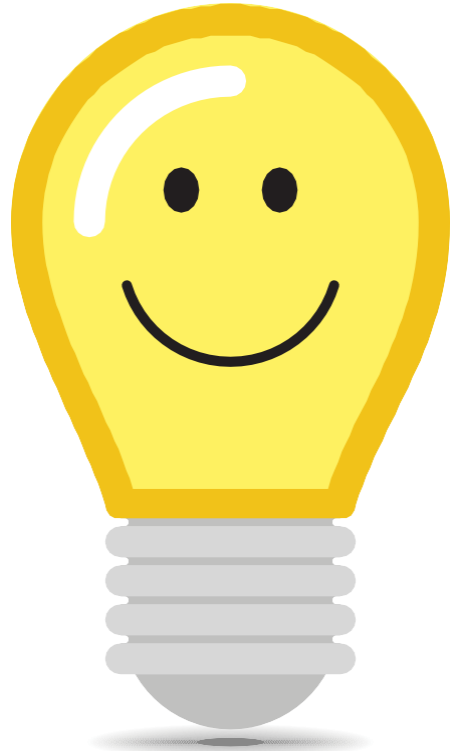
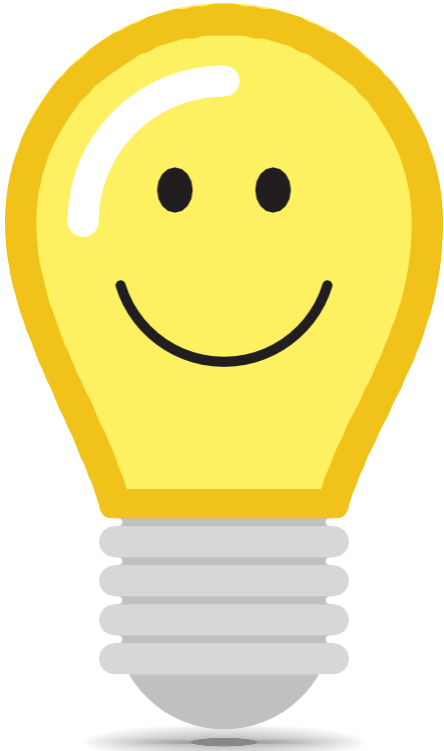
- Does not restore emotional balance, and may make strong emotions (like anger) even worse;
- May be harmful to you, others or property;
- Does not solve the problem; and
- May create more problems.
- Examples: Break something, yell at someone, use alcohol or drugs.

### Neutral/time out

- Not positive or negative, but could lead to problems if used too much;
- May help to calm you and restore emotional balance; and
- Are temporary strategies, and should be used with a positive coping strategy to solve the problem.
- Examples: Walk away from the situation, watch TV, take a hot bath.

# Healthy Transitions

Copy and cut one for each student



# Healthy Transitions

Print and cut one set for each group. Laminate if you wish.

**Positive**



**Negative**



**Neutral**



**Positive**



**Negative**



**Neutral**





# Healthy Transitions

## Reacting to problems: Self-talk (15 minutes)

### Objectives

Students will:

1. Appreciate that we have some control over our feelings and reactions to stress and anxiety.
2. Outline/ demonstrate a process for changing negative self talk.

### Structure

Large group/ small group discussion

### Materials

Flip chart paper, markers, Negative Thoughts/Positive Thoughts Scenarios (copy and clip), Self-Talk explosion chart, Thoughts & Feelings wall signs (used in session 1)

### Lesson Outline

Tell students that during this activity, you will be coming up with different ways of thinking about upsetting situations (situations where we feel worried, angry, nervous or upset). Students will have a chance to examine the negative self talk we tend to participate in and learn to change that into positive self talk.

### Definitions

**Thoughts:** What we think

**Feelings:** What we feel

**Actions:** What we do

**Automatic thoughts:** The thoughts that pop into your head when something goes wrong or a problem occurs. Automatic thoughts are often negative thoughts.

**Negative thoughts:** The thoughts that pop into your head as soon as something goes wrong or a problem occurs. Someone having negative thoughts is thinking that people are doing things “on purpose” or are out to get them.

### Materials

- Flip chart paper;
- Markers;
- Negative Thoughts/Positive Thoughts Scenario Cards
- Self-talk Explosion Chart; and
- Thoughts, Feelings and Actions wall signs (used in Session 1)



# Healthy Transitions

**Positive thoughts:** The thoughts that help us sort out what has really happened. Positive thoughts help us to slow down and think, so we'll have all the information before we decide how to act.

## Activity

1. Have a volunteer select one of the [Negative Thoughts/Positive Thoughts Scenario Cards](#).
2. Using the Thoughts, Feelings & Actions wall signs, reproduce a [Self Talk Explosion Chart](#) on the board or flipchart.
3. Use the [Negative Thoughts/Positive Thoughts Discussion Guide](#) to facilitate the discussion.
4. Distribute the 'Reacting to Problems: Self Talk Can Change a Lot' [worksheet](#) and [explosion chart](#) so that students can follow along individually. Record the selected "situation" on the board/flip chart explosion chart vertically while working through the negative self-talk situation and corresponding thoughts, feelings and actions. Encourage students to record on their blank explosion chart.
5. Ask students to come up with positive self-talk that might lead to feeling better about the same situation. Write one example of a positive self-talk "situation" on the board/flip chart. Continue to work through the positive self-talk situation and corresponding thoughts, feelings and actions. Encourage students to record on their blank explosion chart.
6. Advise the students: By practicing positive self-talk, our thoughts will be positive and help us sort out what really happened. We can then react to a problem in a much more positive way. Positive self-talk helps us to improve or to feel better about the situation.
7. Summarize by reminding students how self-talk impacted the feelings and actions of famous people in the Rebounding activity from the first session. Reinforce that self-talk affects how we feel about things that happen to us. Our self-talk also influences our actions. The actions we take also impact feelings (handling something well or doing something you didn't think you could do can make you feel very good inside).
8. You can continue this for as many situations as you have time for. If appropriate, students can also work through situations in small groups, and can reconvene/report to the larger group. Ask students if they would like to offer suggestions for situations to work through.
9. Share with students: Sometimes we are feeling so badly that trying to change our self-talk doesn't help as much. At these times we need to ACT: we can reach out to others who can help us, (family, friends, or adults in our school or community). We can also try some of the positive coping strategies we talked about in the previous activity.

# Healthy Transitions

## Negative Thoughts/Positive Thoughts Scenario Cards

Print and cut scenarios along dotted lines.

**Scenario 1:** You played on the school volleyball team last year, and played pretty well. Try outs for this year's team have just finished, and you think you've done well. The list of players who have made the team has just been posted outside the gym, and your name isn't on the list.

**Scenario 2:** You're getting a drink at the water fountain. There are a few other students behind you. Suddenly, you get bumped from behind, and your face is all wet.

**Scenario 3:** You're out with your family when you see a friend of yours with their parents/guardians. You smile and wave but they don't wave back.

**Scenario 4:** You get a new haircut. When you approach a group of friends, everyone starts laughing.

**Scenario 5:** You're doing well in math, in fact, the teacher asks you to help other students. You get an A. One of the students you've been helping was failing math, but now they have a C. The teacher gives them the 'Student of the Month' award.

**Scenario 6:** You send a friend a message. It shows that they read it but they did not write you back.

**Scenario 7:** You're waiting to meet friends at the movie theater. It's 30 minutes past the time you were supposed to meet, and they still haven't arrived.

**Scenario 8:** Your parent/guardian comes home with some new clothes for your younger brother. They didn't get anything for you.

# Healthy Transitions

## Negative Thoughts/Positive Thoughts Discussion Guide

Use this guide to facilitate and extend the discussion.

**Scenario 1:** You played on the school volleyball team last year, and played pretty well. Try outs for this year's team have just finished, and you think you've done well. The list of players who have made the team has just been posted outside the gym, and your name isn't on the list.



### Possible negative thoughts:

- The coach hates me.
- The coach is punishing me.
- The coach is out to get me.
- The coach is trying to embarrass me.



### Possible positive thoughts:

- Maybe it's just a mistake and they forgot my name.
- Maybe they just need more strikers.
- Maybe they had enough grade 8 players.
- Maybe they wanted to give someone else a chance.

**Ask:** "What would happen if you acted on a negative thought, and your coach had just forgotten to put your name on the list?"

**Scenario 2:** You're getting a drink at the water fountain. There are a few other students behind you. Suddenly, you get bumped from behind, and your face is all wet.



### Possible negative thoughts:

- They did that on purpose!
- Why can't they just wait their turn?



### Possible positive thoughts:

- Okay, what happened here?
- Was this just an accident?

**Ask:** What if it WAS just an accident and if you had acted on your negative thoughts?"

**Scenario 3:** You're out with your family when you see a friend of yours with his parents. You smile and wave but they don't wave back.



### Possible negative thoughts:

- They completely ignored me.
- Why are they angry with me?
- They hate me.
- What did I do to them?



### Possible positive thoughts:

- I guess they didn't see me.
- Maybe they are embarrassed to be with their parents.

**Ask:** "What would happen if you accused your friend of ignoring you?"

# Healthy Transitions

**Scenario 4:** You get a new haircut. When you approach a group of friends, everyone starts laughing.



**Possible negative thoughts:**

- They're making fun of me.
- They think I look stupid.
- Some friends!
- They're just jealous.



**Possible positive thoughts:**

- Maybe this has nothing to do with my hair.
- Maybe someone just told a joke.
- Maybe there's something funny behind me.

**Ask:** "What might happen if you acted right away on your 'negative thoughts'?"

**Scenario 5:** You're doing well in math, in fact, the teacher asks you to help other students. You get an A. One of the students you have been helping was failing math, but now they have a C. The teacher gives them the 'Student of the Month' award.



**Possible negative thoughts:**

- They're taking advantage of me.
- I'm not getting any credit.
- No one notices how well I'm doing.
- The teacher hates me.



**Possible positive thoughts:**

- Maybe the teacher thought they needed the recognition more than I did.
- Maybe the teacher thinks I get enough recognition for good marks.
- They were really proud when they got that award.
- I get noticed for lots of things.

**Ask:** "What might happen if you acted right away on your 'negative thoughts'?"

**Scenario 6:** You send a friend a message. It shows that they read it but they did not write you back.



**Possible negative thoughts:**

- They're ignoring me.
- They're mad at me for no reason!
- They only message me if they have nothing better to do.



**Possible positive thoughts:**

- Maybe they're busy.
- Maybe they got distracted and forgot.
- Maybe something happened at home.

**Ask:** "What would happen if you accused your friend of purposely ignoring your messages?" "How could you find out what happened without accusing?"

# Healthy Transitions

**Scenario 7:** You're waiting to meet friends at the movie theatre. It's 30 minutes past the time you were supposed to meet, and they still haven't arrived.



**Possible negative thoughts:**

- They ditched me!
- They went to another movie without me!
- They're always doing this to me!



**Possible positive thoughts:**

- Maybe their ride is late.
- Maybe they missed the bus.
- Maybe something else happened.
- Maybe they got their directions wrong.

**Ask:** "What might happen if you acted right away on your 'negative thoughts'?"

**Scenario 8:** Your parent/guardian came home with some new clothes for your younger brother. They didn't get anything for you.



**Possible negative thoughts:**

- They hate me.
- He's always been their favourite.
- I never get anything.



**Possible positive thoughts:**

- Maybe there wasn't anything in my size.
- I just got new things.
- Maybe next time it will be the other way around.

**Ask:** "What might happen if you acted right away on your 'negative thoughts'?"

# Healthy Transitions

## Worksheet

### Reacting to Problems: Self-Talk Can Change a Lot

#### Negative thoughts



#### You think...

- that was on purpose!
- they're out to get me!
- that was no accident!



#### You feel...

- hurt; and
- angry



#### Results...

- we can overreact;
- we can create a problem, when there was none to start with;
- we can make problems worse; and
- it can increase stress, worry and hurt.

#### Positive thoughts



#### You think...

- what happened here?
- maybe they were thinking something else?
- what are some of the other reasons for this?



#### You feel...

- calmer and in control; and
- that you can solve the problem



#### Results...

- we can get to the bottom of the problem or misunderstanding;
- we can prevent conflict;
- it's easier to find solutions to the problems; and
- it can reduce stress, worry and hurt.

Concept adapted with permission from the Penn Resilience Program.

# Healthy Transitions

## Explosion Chart

Reacting to Problems: Self-Talk Can Change a Lot



Negative self-talk situation:

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Positive self-talk situation:

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THOUGHTS

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ACTIONS

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# Healthy Transitions



## Learn to Chill

Use this relaxation technique when you're feeling angry, worried or stressed. It can also help if you're having trouble falling asleep.

1. Find a comfortable spot. Lie down if you wish.
2. Think of a peaceful place. Close your eyes and imagine yourself in a place where you have felt peaceful and relaxed (for example: under a tree, a park, beside a lake, etc.).
3. Breathe. Breathe in slowly through your nose, and out through your mouth. Put a hand on your stomach. It should rise with each breath in.
4. Begin by clenching your toes and tightening the muscles in your feet—hold for 3 seconds, then completely relax. Feel the tension leave your feet. Think about your feet being heavy and warm.
5. Repeat the muscle tightening and relaxation (and warm, heavy feeling), moving up your body:
  - calves;
  - thighs;
  - back and stomach;
  - hands and arms;
  - chest, shoulders and neck; and
  - face and jaw.
6. Rest quietly. Bring your thoughts back to your peaceful place if they start to wander.

### The mini chill

You can help yourself calm down quickly throughout the day with this exercise:

- breathe in through your nose, making sure your abdominal muscles move out as the breath comes in;
- breathe out slowly through the mouth;
- take three breaths like this; and
- do a quick check of your face (eyebrows, jaw), shoulders, neck and hands, and consciously relax these areas.



## Session 3:

When it Feels Like Too Much – Who can help us through it

Grade 8	Session 3 – Curriculum Expectations
	Personal Skills: 1.1, 1.2
	Interpersonal Skills: 1.4
	Creative and Critical Thinking: 1.1
	Substance Use, Addictions and Related Behaviours: C2.3

# Healthy Transitions

## Let's get prepared!

1. Copy:
  - [Famous People handouts](#) (one per student); and
  - [Who are my Newfoundland Dogs? handout](#) (one per student).
2. Copy and cut [paper hearts](#) or use sticky notes (at least one per student, have extras on hand).
3. Assemble markers, tape, flip chart paper (if using).

## Key messages for the session

- Many people can experience a mental illness in their lives. With the proper treatment and support, they can recover or stabilize and continue to have successful lives.
- Everyone experiences emotional pain (heart aches).
- We all need to have people in our lives to turn to (our Newfoundland dogs!). We can also be a support for others.
- Newfoundland dogs are considered the best for their water rescuing abilities. The dog is a symbol of the province of Newfoundland and Labrador and the subject of many stories based on the breed's bravery and loyalty. Newfoundland dogs are like the people in our lives who can pull us to safety and help us when we need it.
- We need to get help for emotional pain, just as we would get help for a physical illness or an injury. We don't go to the doctor for all illnesses (for example, a simple cold), but we do tell others that we're not well, and get help (we may stay home from school, or our families may give us medicine, juice, tissues etc.). We need to do this for heart aches as well—tell others how we're feeling. Sometimes that's all we need to help us feel better.
- There are things we can do to prevent heart aches from becoming more serious problems (positive self talk, positive coping and getting help when needed). Sometimes the emotional pain is overwhelming and then it is REALLY important to get help.

## Session outline

10 minutes: Warm up activity: Famous people

25 minutes: Heart aches

15 minutes: Personal Newfoundland dogs

# Healthy Transitions

## Warm up activity: Famous people (10 minutes)

### Objectives

Students will:

1. Recognize that many people experience emotional struggles and problems with mental health.
2. Appreciate that having problems and seeking help does not stop people from having successful and fulfilling lives.

### Structure

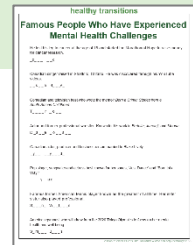
Small group activity with larger group discussion

### Activity

1. Divide the group into smaller groups of 3-4 and distribute one handout for each student.
2. Explain to students that all the people on the handout have experienced emotional health problems, and most sought help for these problems.
3. Have students complete the handout in their small groups, providing additional hints as necessary. Give the students 5 minutes or so to complete their task, then reconvene as a larger group.
4. Using the answer key, go through the responses on the handout together as a larger group. Share the mental health problem that the 'famous person' experienced. Reinforce the idea that famous people of today all sought help for their problems, and were able to achieve success.
5. Ask students what might have happened if these people did not seek help? Stress the importance of getting help for problems early, as they are often easier to work out if one gets help early on.

### Materials

- Famous People handout (one for each student)



## Healthy Transitions

# Famous People Who Have Experienced Mental Health Challenges

He lost his leg to cancer at the age of 18 and started the Marathon of Hope to raise money for cancer research.

\_e\_ \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ \_x

Canadian singer raised in Stratford, Ontario. He was discovered through his YouTube videos.

\_ \_ \_s\_ \_ \_n\_ B\_ \_ \_ \_e\_

Comedian and television host who wrote the memoir *Born a Crime: Stories from a South African Childhood*.

T\_ \_ \_ \_ \_r\_ \_o\_ \_ \_

Actor and former professional wrestler. Known for his work in *Fortnite*, *Jumanji*, and *Moana*.

D\_ \_a\_ \_ \_e\_ \_o\_ \_ \_s\_ \_ \_

Canadian actor, producer and businessperson married to Blake Lively.

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Pop singer, songwriter and actress best known for her songs, “Just Dance” and “Born this Way.”

\_ \_ \_ \_y\_ \_a\_ g\_ \_

Famous former American tennis player known as the greatest of all time. Her elder sister also played professional.

S\_ \_ \_ \_n\_ W\_ \_l\_ \_ \_ \_s

American gymnast who withdrew from the 2020 Tokyo Olympics to focus on her mental health and well-being.

S\_ \_m\_ \_ \_ \_ \_ B\_ \_ \_ \_s

# Healthy Transitions

## Answer Key

Clue	'Famous Person'	Mental Health Concern
He lost his leg to cancer at the age of 18 and started the Marathon of Hope to raise money for cancer research.	Terry Fox	Struggled with the loss of his leg
Canadian singer raised in Stratford, Ontario. He was discovered through his YouTube videos.	Justin Bieber	Depression
Comedian and television host who wrote the memoir <i>Born a Crime: Stories from a South African Childhood</i> .	Trevor Noah	ADHD and Depression
Actor and former professional wrestler. Known for his work in <i>Fortnite</i> , <i>Jumanji</i> , and <i>Moana</i> .	Dwayne Johnson	Depression
Canadian actor, producer and businessperson married to Blake Lively.	Ryan Reynolds	Anxiety
Pop singer, songwriter and actress best known for her songs, "Just Dance" and "Born this Way."	Lady Gaga	Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD)
Famous former American tennis player known as the greatest of all time. Her elder sister also played professional.	Serena Williams	Anxiety and depression
American gymnast who withdrew from the 2020 Tokyo Olympics to focus on her mental health and well-being.	Simone Biles	No diagnosis. Struggled with her mental health

# Healthy Transitions

## Heart aches (25 minutes)

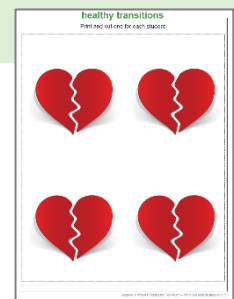
### Objectives

Students will:

1. Recognize personal, physical responses to strong feelings.
2. Identify characteristics of emotional pain.
3. Compare common reactions to physical pain and emotional pain (or heart aches).
4. Appreciate the value of social support.
5. Accept that it is healthy and positive to discuss emotional pain, and to get help when needed.

### Materials

- Flip chart paper;
- Markers;
- Tape; and
- Paper heart cut outs or sticky notes (one per student)



### Structure

Large group discussion

### Activity

1. Ask students, “How do we know when we’re upset?” (How do we feel inside when we’re upset?). Assist students to identify physical “symptoms” related to a stressful or upsetting situation. Students may share situations when they experience these “symptoms” if they wish.

For example:

- sweaty palms;
- shaking hands;
- heart beating quickly;
- dry mouth;
- shaky voice;
- red blotches on skin;
- lump in throat;
- headache;
- tense muscles;
- clenching teeth
- “butterflies” in stomach.

## Healthy Transitions

2. Reinforce that strong emotions can have a real impact on our bodies. The first thing we can do is to do an “internal check” of our bodies. If we notice that we are experiencing some of the sensations described above, then it’s time to do something to help ourselves relax and calm down, e.g., coping strategies, relaxation.
3. Ask for a volunteer who would like to draw on the board or flip chart. Ask the student to draw 2 people large enough for the group to see (very simple figures will do). Facilitator can also do the drawing if there are no volunteers.
4. Ask the group to give you some examples of causes of physical pain. These examples could be related to illnesses or injuries that students themselves have experienced. Ask your volunteer artist to draw these sources of pain and the effects of the pain on one of the figures (e.g. broken legs, cuts, bruises, headaches, diseases etc.).
5. Ask students:
  - How long would it take for you to tell someone you were in sick or in pain and needed help?
  - Would you be embarrassed to tell someone?
  - Where would you go for help?
6. Distribute blank paper hearts or sticky notes to students. Ask students to write (in one sentence or less) an example of something that may cause a ‘heart ache’ (emotional pain) in a person their age. It doesn’t have to be a personal experience. Explain that a heartache occurs when we are really hurting inside, it’s not just about romance. Have additional hearts on hand so that students can share more than one heart ache if they wish. Tell students that no one will know who wrote what on the hearts.

### **Examples of causes of heart aches include:**

- major change in your family (divorce, a death, serious illness, trouble with a sibling);
- a parent/guardian has a problem and it’s affecting you;
- someone has done something to hurt you;
- big changes like a new school, new city or a new country;
- problems with friends, or trouble getting along with people;
- worry about school work;
- trouble handling feelings (feeling worried or sad all the time, unable to control anger);
- making a mistake, and not knowing how to sort it out;
- feeling guilty and sad about things going on in the world (wars, poverty, disasters, etc.)



# Healthy Transitions

7. Collect the hearts. Read each one out loud, and tape them up, all over the second figure. A volunteer can help if needed.
8. Ask students:
  - How long would it take for you to tell someone you were hurting or struggling and needed help?
  - Would you be embarrassed to tell someone about a heart ache?
  - Why?
  - Where would you go for help?

Note the differences in responses for physical pain and emotional pain (heart ache). Suggest that things would be much easier for us if we thought about our heart aches the way we think about physical pain or illness (e.g. not being embarrassed to talk about it, getting help etc.)

9. Use the following discussion guide to facilitate discussion on heart aches.

**Be sure to highlight:**

- It could be helpful to talk with others and get help when we're having emotional pain (or a heart ache).
- We may be able to prevent some heart aches, or prevent them from getting worse or turning into serious problems.
- We all have heart aches, and emotional pain, it's part of being human.

**Some things we have talked about in Healthy Transitions that can help us through tough times include:**

- Positive self-talk (changing the way we think about things);
- Accepting our feelings, then using positive coping (doing things that 'restore' emotional balance, help us to feel better, and may help solve a problem);
- Relaxation;
- Sharing our feelings with others and getting help if needed; and
- Helping and supporting each other through hard times.

**Note:** Some mental health problems are caused by chemical imbalances in the brain (even so—all of the above will help someone with a mental health problem).

**Ask:**

- Why could it be helpful to talk with others and get help when we're struggling?

# Healthy Transitions

## Examples:

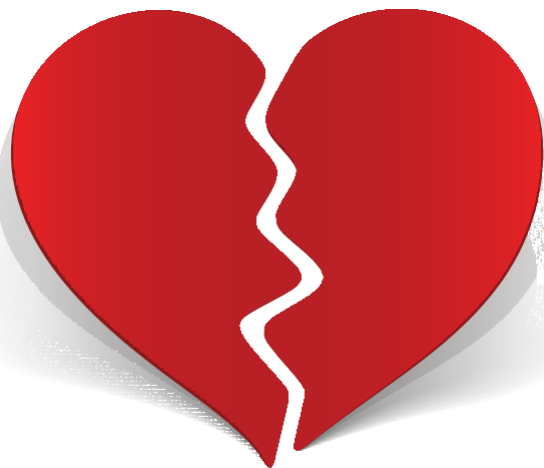
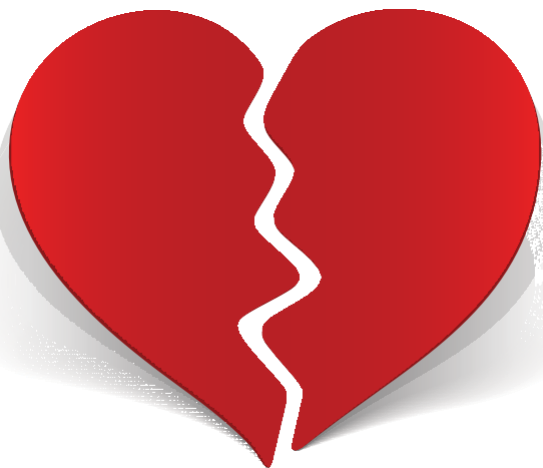
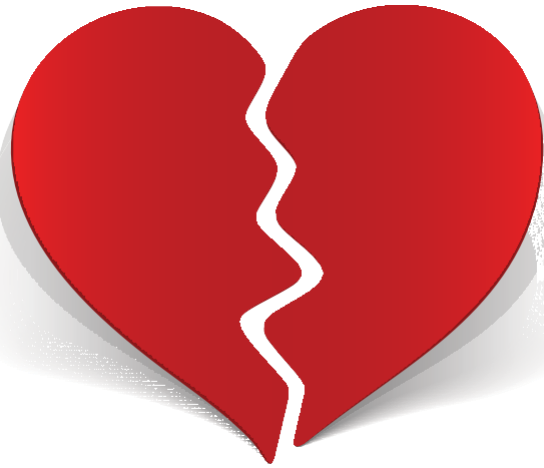
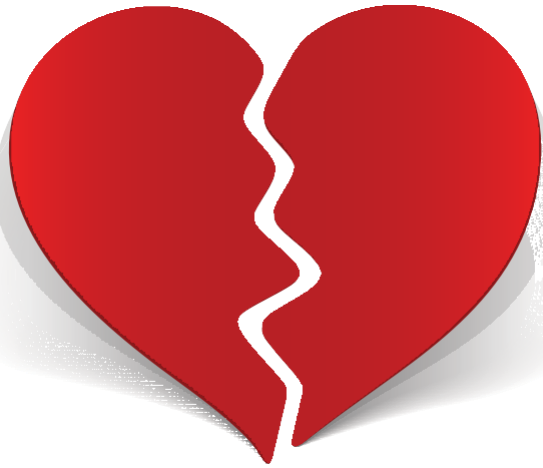
- It feels better to talk it out, you may feel less worried and anxious;
- it could prevent things from getting worse;
- it might help to solve the problem;
- feels good to know someone understands you and supports you; and
- sometimes the problem is too big to handle alone, and you're having a hard time coping.

10. Remind students that we need to get help and support for our heart aches, just as we would for a physical illness or injury. It's important to help friends to do this too. Highlight any school or community professionals who are providing the Healthy Transitions program. Remind students of the services available to them, if needed:

- [kidshelpphone.ca](http://kidshelpphone.ca)
- [onestoptalk.ca](http://onestoptalk.ca) and
- [School Mental Health Ontario - Students page](#)

# Healthy Transitions

Print and cut one for each student



# Healthy Transitions

## Personal Newfoundland Dogs (15 minutes)

### Objectives

Learners will:

1. Learn about the metaphor of the Newfoundland dog, as someone in our lives who can help us when we need it.
2. Identify personal strategies and people in their lives that can help when things get rough.

### Materials

- Markers; and
- Who Are My Newfoundland Dogs? handout

### Structure

Large group activity

### Activity

1. Explain that Newfoundland dogs are known for their water rescuing abilities. The dog is a symbol of the province of Newfoundland and Labrador and the subject of many stories based on the breed's bravery and loyalty.<sup>69</sup> Like Newfoundland dogs, there are people in our lives who can pull us to safety and help us when we need it.
2. Distribute the "Who Are My Newfoundland Dogs"? handout. Explain to students that when things are tough, there are things we can do, and people we can turn to, to help us feel better. Ask students to think about:
  - things they can do to help themselves handle the situation and feel better; and
  - people in their lives who can help.
3. Ask students to record this on the appropriate areas on the handout (on the lines provided or around the 'rings'). Remind them of specific community/school resources (teachers, school secretary, child and youth counsellor, school guidance counsellor, social worker, family doctor, faith leader, community health centre, etc.).
4. As students complete their handouts, prompt them to consider some of the personal strategies discussed in the program, such as:
  - positive self talk;
  - communication;
  - relaxation; and
  - positive coping.



## Healthy Transitions

5. Remind them of the services available to them, if needed:
  - [kidshelpphone.ca](http://kidshelpphone.ca)
  - [onestoptalk.ca](http://onestoptalk.ca) and
  - [School Mental Health Ontario - Students page](#)
6. Distribute markers, so students can colour the rings of the rainbow on the handout.

# Who Are My Newfoundland Dogs?

List the things you can do and the people in your life who can help you when things get tough.





## Session 4:

### Communication – What we say and how we say it matters

**Grade 8**

**Session 4 – Curriculum Expectations**

Interpersonal Skills: 1.3

# Healthy Transitions

## Let's get prepared!

### 1. Copy/Print:

- [Communication Scenario Cards](#) (one set for each group) cut out and paste on construction paper, laminate if you wish to protect against the wear and tear of repeated use;
- [Talking to others: Styles of communication handouts](#) (one per student);
- [The Formula for Assertive Responses handout](#) (one per student); and
- [Listening well handout](#) (one per student); and
- [True/false cards](#). Cut and laminate if you wish to protect against wear and tear of repeated use.

## Key messages for the session

- The way we communicate has consequences for:
  - whether or not we get what we're looking for;
  - our relationships;
  - how others see us and treat us;
  - whether or not problems get solved or get worse; and
  - our feelings and the feelings of others.
- Assertive communication is usually the best way to:
  - promote good relationships and emotional well-being in ourselves and others;
  - get our needs met (although it's no guarantee);
  - resolve conflicts; and
  - express feelings.
- Assertive communication takes practice.
- There are situations where passive and aggressive responses may be the best choice.

## Session outline

10 minutes: Warm up activity: Drawing bugs

25 minutes: How to talk so others will listen

10 minutes: True/false activity



# Healthy Transitions

## Warm up activity: Drawing bugs<sup>68</sup> (10 minutes)

Review ground rules (see Section 1-Program Overview section).

### Objectives

Students will appreciate other people's perspectives on the same situation.

### Structure

Large group activity

### Materials

Paper, pens and pencils

### Activity

1. Tell students that you're going to describe a drawing of a bug, and that you'd like them to draw a bug just like it. Students will not be able to ask questions or look at a drawing during the activity.
2. Describe the bug for students to draw:
  - The bug is round.
  - The bug has eight legs, grouped in pairs with four legs on the left and four legs on the right. In the pairs, one leg is longer than the other.
  - The bug has two eyes on top of the body.
  - The bug has two squiggly antennae.
  - The bug has two tree leaf shaped wings.
  - The bug has a spot next to each wing.
  - The bug has a triangular stinger on the bottom of the body.
  - The bug has two feelers on each foot—one longer than the other.
  - The bug has a round mouth, placed between the two eyes.
  - The bug laid five square eggs to the left of the stinger.
3. After everyone is finished, ask students to hold up their drawing for the entire group to see.
4. Facilitate a brief discussion with the following questions:

# Healthy Transitions

- How did it feel not being able to clarify the instructions?
- Why were people so concerned about 'doing it right?'
- Why do all the bugs look different? (everyone has a different interpretation of the description, based on personal life experiences)
- What would have helped so that the drawings would look more alike? (asking questions and clarifying would have helped)
- Does this activity demonstrate anything about real life? (There are many different ways of looking at the same situation; clarifying what you've heard is important)

## How to talk so others will listen (25 minutes)

### Objectives

Learners will:

1. Describe three basic communication styles (assertive, aggressive, passive).
2. Consider the consequences of various communication styles.
3. Discuss how assertive communication can:
  - promote good relationships and emotional well being in ourselves and others;
  - get our needs met (although this is no guarantee);
  - resolve conflicts; and
  - express feelings.

### Structure

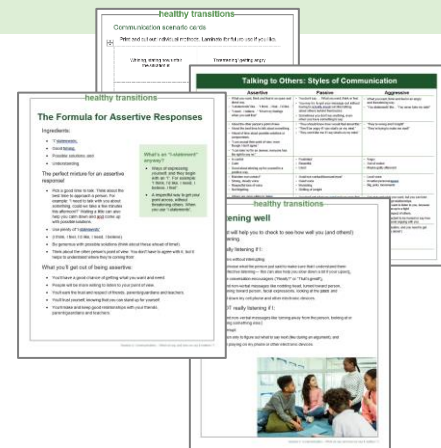
Group brainstorming and role-plays

### Lesson Outline

Understanding the three communication styles and what they look like. Practicing assertive communication.

### Materials

- Communication scenario cards (copy and cut out from template provided);
- Talking to Others handout;
- The Formula for Assertive Responses handout; and
- Listening Well handout



# Healthy Transitions

## Activity

1. Distribute the 'Talking to Others' handout. Explain there are many ways to express our needs, wants and feelings and we all use these methods to get our point across. Review the handout and discuss the 3 communication styles. Provide examples using the following scenario:

*You'd like to go to hang out with friends, and stay out 30 minutes later than usual. No adults will be with you. Your parents/guardians refuse.*

Use the examples below to role play AGGRESSIVE, PASSIVE & ASSERTIVE communication:

**Aggressive:** "You never let me go out with my friends, whether my homework is done or not!" (loud voice, threatening body language, etc.)

**Passive:** "It's not fair, my friends get to do it." (quiet voice, whining)

**Assertive:** "I'd really like to go out with my friends. I've done my homework and chores for the day. Would that be OK?" (calm voice, maintain eye contact, relaxed body)

2. Distribute the "Formula for Assertive Responses" handout. Highlight to students the use of "I Statements" and "You Statements" in the "Talking to Others" handout:

**I Statements:** Saying "I need; I want; I feel". Talking like this is a respectful way to make your point and does not make the other person feel threatened or blamed.

**You Statements:** Saying "You never listen; you don't understand" makes the person feel like the situation is their fault, makes them defensive and less likely to listen to you.

If you are assertive and use "I Statements" you are more likely to get what you want and keep the respect of others.

3. Tell students that you'll be doing a little role-playing. Pre-select one scenario from the list of scenarios below and select 1 communication scenario card (pg. 78) of your choice for students to role-play. Quietly review the scenario and communication style with student so they understand what they are role-playing.

Repeat role-playing with different scenarios and different communication methods with groups of 3-4 students. Ensure you have selected one example of each style of communication i.e. passive, aggressive and 2 assertive cards. If students don't enjoy role-playing, facilitators can demonstrate communication styles and have students guess.

# Healthy Transitions

## Scenarios:

- You are working on a school project with a classmate, who is not doing their fair share of the work. You're feeling used.
- You would like to go to a party but your parents/guardians refuse because they do not know who the guests will be.
- Have students come up with a scenario between a student and a teacher, where the student would have to get a point across to the teacher.
- You're asking for money from your parents/guardians to buy something (clothes, video game, etc.) you would really like to have.
- You would like to get a social media account (i.e., Instagram, TikTok) and your parents/guardians don't really want you to.
- You have a big school project due right after March Break, but you and your family are going away for the break. You won't be able to get the project done in time.
- You would really like to get a cell phone, but your parents/guardians say they think you're too young to have one.

## 4. For each method demonstrated, ask students:

- Would this method work? (Help get you what you want?)
- What would some consequences be of using this approach?
- How would you feel? How would the other person feel?
- Would you describe this method as assertive, aggressive or passive (or a mixture of two?) See answer key on page 79.

## 5. Reinforce that while assertiveness may not always get you what you want (others always have the right to say no), it offers a good chance of success, and it also helps to build or keep positive relationships. Other methods may get people what they want in the short term, but can create problems in the future.

## 6. Remind students that there are times when a passive or a verbally aggressive response may be the best choice. Ask students for examples of such situations (for example—when the other person is in a bad mood, you may choose to be quiet and wait to discuss things later, this is PASSIVE. An AGGRESSIVE response would be appropriate if you are in a risky or dangerous situation and you need to get out right away (e.g., "Get away from me now!", or "Leave me alone!").

## 7. Distribute the "Listening Well" handout. Another important piece to good communication is LISTENING. Be sure to listen without interrupting, make eye contact, nod your head or say "really, that's great", for example, to show you are paying attention. Do NOT, look at your cell phone, text or watch TV while the other person is trying to talk to you. This shows you are NOT listening to them and it is not very respectful.

# Healthy Transitions

## Communication scenario cards

Print and cut out individual methods. Laminate for future use if you like.

Whining, stating how unfair the situation is	Threatening/ getting angry
Pleading, begging	Not asking directly, not being direct, giving big hints
Having a temper tantrum	Not saying anything, but making sure they know you're upset (silent treatment)
Making the other person feel guilty	Flattering the person/ sucking up
Repeating the same request over and over (pestering)	Negotiate & compromise
Being honest, stating your case, expressing what is important for you, and paying attention to the other person's concerns	Stating what you want in a direct way and speaking in a calm voice

# Healthy Transitions

## Communication scenarios answer key

Print and cut out each individual method. Laminate for future use if you like.

<p>Whining, stating how unfair the situation is</p> <p><b>Method of Communication:</b> Passive/Aggressive</p> <p><b>Example:</b> "You never let me". All my friends are allowed! It's not fair".</p>	<p>Threatening/ getting angry</p> <p><b>Method of Communication:</b> Aggressive</p> <p><b>Example:</b> "I'll do it anyway! Even if you don't want me to!"</p>
<p>Pleading, begging</p> <p><b>Method of Communication:</b> Passive</p> <p><b>Example:</b> "Please I really want to go. Please, Please say yes."</p>	<p>Not asking directly, not being direct, giving big hints</p> <p><b>Method of Communication:</b> Passive</p> <p><b>Example:</b> "Pout"</p>
<p>Having a temper tantrum</p> <p><b>Method of Communication:</b> Aggressive</p> <p><b>Example:</b> Scream "I'm never allowed to do anything!"</p>	<p>Not saying anything, but making sure they know you're upset (silent treatment)</p> <p><b>Method of Communication:</b> Passive</p> <p><b>Example:</b> "Silent treatment"</p>
<p>Making the other person feel guilty</p> <p><b>Method of Communication:</b> Aggressive</p> <p><b>Example:</b> "All the other parents/guardians said yes. You're really not cool!"</p>	<p>Flattering the person/ sucking up</p> <p><b>Method of Communication:</b> Passive</p> <p><b>Example:</b> "Come on, you would be the best mom ever."</p>
<p>Repeating the same request over and over (pestering)</p> <p><b>Method of Communication:</b> Aggressive</p> <p><b>Example:</b> "I really want to go. Can I go? Can I go? Can I go?"</p>	<p>Negotiate &amp; compromise</p> <p><b>Method of Communication:</b> Assertive</p> <p><b>Example:</b> "I understand why you're worried. I could go see another movie and only be 15 minutes late?"</p>
<p>Being honest, stating your case, expressing what is important for you, and paying attention to the other person's concerns</p> <p><b>Method of Communication:</b> Assertive</p> <p><b>Example:</b> "I realize you're worried, but I really want to go. I'll be with Mary, Isabelle and Emma. I promise to be careful."</p>	<p>Stating what you want in a direct way and speaking in a calm voice</p> <p><b>Method of Communication:</b> Assertive</p> <p><b>Example:</b> Talk calmly and explain who, what, when and where.</p>

# Talking to Others: Styles of Communication

	Assertive	Passive	Aggressive
<b>You say...</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What you want, think and feel in an open and direct way.</li> <li>• “I-statements” like... “I think...I feel...I’d like...”</li> <li>• “I need...I believe...” “It hurt my feelings when you said that.”</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• You don’t say.... What you want, think or feel.</li> <li>• You may try to get your message out without having to actually speak out (like talking about others behind their backs).</li> <li>• Sometimes you don’t say anything, even when you have something to say.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What you want, think and feel in an angry and threatening way.</li> <li>• “You-statements” like... “You never take my side!”</li> </ul>
<b>You think...</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• About the other person’s point of view.</li> <li>• About the best time to talk about something.</li> <li>• Ahead of time about possible solutions or compromises.</li> <li>• “I can accept their point of view, even though I don’t agree.”</li> <li>• “I can take ‘no’ for an answer, everyone has the right to say ‘no’.”</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “They should know how I would feel about this.”</li> <li>• “They’ll be angry if I say what’s on my mind.”</li> <li>• “They won’t like me if I say what’s on my mind.”</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “They’re wrong and I’m right!”</li> <li>• “They’re trying to make me mad!”</li> </ul>
<b>You feel...</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In control</li> <li>• Calm</li> <li>• Good about sticking up for yourself in a positive way</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Frustrated</li> <li>• Resentful</li> <li>• Used</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Angry</li> <li>• Out of control</li> <li>• Maybe guilty afterward</li> </ul>
<b>You act...</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maintain eye contact*</li> <li>• Strong, steady voice</li> <li>• Respectful tone of voice</li> <li>• Not fidgeting</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Avoid eye contact/downcast eyes*</li> <li>• Quiet voice</li> <li>• Mumbling</li> <li>• Shifting of weight</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Loud voice</li> <li>• Invades personal space</li> <li>• Big, jerky movements</li> </ul>
<b>Results...</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Others are more willing to listen.</li> <li>• You increase your chances of being heard, and getting what you want or need.</li> <li>• You’ll earn the respect of others.</li> <li>• You may not always get what you want, but you keep good relationships with your friends, parents/guardians and teachers.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• You don’t get what you want and you may feel used.</li> <li>• You may get pushed around.</li> <li>• Frustration may build up inside.</li> <li>• Others begin to forget you have an opinion.</li> <li>• Problems don’t get solved.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• You may get what you want, but you can lose friends and damage relationships.</li> <li>• Others don’t really want to listen to you, because they know it will end up in a fight.</li> <li>• You can lose the respect of others.</li> <li>• People may be reluctant to be honest or say how they really feel to avoid arguing with you.</li> </ul>
<b>Works when...</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Good for almost any situation. Especially good for working out a problem.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It might be a good idea to avoid conflict. For example, if:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It’s a risky situation;</li> <li>• You need time to calm down and think;</li> <li>• You are waiting for a better time.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• You’re in a risky situation, and you need to get out fast! (“Leave me alone!”)</li> </ul>

\*Note: Use of eye contact may vary based on culture, neurodiversity, or may be affected by physical disabilities.

## The Formula for Assertive Responses

### Ingredients:

- “I” statements;
- Good timing;
- Possible solutions; and
- Understanding.

### The perfect mixture for an assertive response!

- Pick a good time to talk. Think about the best time to approach a person. For example: “I need to talk with you about something, could we take a few minutes this afternoon?” Waiting a little can also help you calm down and come up with possible solutions.
- Use plenty of “I-statements.” (I think, I feel, I’d like, I need, I believe).
- Be generous with possible solutions (think about these ahead of time!).
- Think about the other person’s point of view. You don’t have to agree with it, but it helps to understand ‘where they’re coming from’.

### What you’ll get out of being assertive:

- You’ll have a good chance of getting what you want and need.
- People will be more willing to listen to your point of view.
- You’ll earn the trust and respect of friends, parents/guardians and teachers.
- You’ll trust yourself, knowing that you can stand up for yourself.
- You’ll make and keep good relationships with your friends, parent/guardians and teachers.

### What’s an “I-statement” anyway?

- Ways of expressing yourself, and they begin with an “I”. For example: “I think, I’d like, I need, I believe, I feel”.
- A respectful way to get your point across, without threatening others. When you use “I-statements”,



## Listening well

This list will help you to check to see how well you (and others!) are listening.

I'm really listening if I:

- listen without interrupting;
- rephrase what the person just said to make sure that I understand them (reflective listening— this can also help you slow down a bit if your upset);
- use conversation encouragers (“Really?” or “That’s great!”);
- send non-verbal messages like nodding head, turned toward person, leaning toward person, facial expressions, looking at the person; and
- put down my cell phone and other electronic devices.

I'm NOT really listening if I:

- send non-verbal messages like turning away from the person, looking at or doing something else;
- interrupt;
- listen only to figure out what to say next (like during an argument); and
- am playing on my phone or other electronic devices.



# Healthy Transitions

## True / false activity (5 minutes)

### Objectives

Learners will:

- Recall major concepts learned in previous sessions.

### Structure

Large group activity

### Activity

1. Distribute one 'true' and 'false' flag to each student. Explain that you will be reading out statements, and that students will have to decide if the statement is true or false. If they believe the statement is true, they can show the 'true' card, and vice versa if they feel the statement is false. Provide a brief clarification of the statement after students respond. You can do this by reviewing each statement with the group, or ask students leading questions to come up with similar conclusions.

### Materials

- One true/false "flag" for each student.



#### **We have some control over our mental health.**

True.

Although we can't always control what happens to us, we have some control over how we react. Sometimes changing the way we think about things can help. At other times, though, our feelings are so overwhelming and painful that we need to talk to others for help and support. This is another really important way we can prevent our struggles from turning into more serious problems.

#### **Newfoundland dogs are little dogs that can save victims of an avalanche.**

False.

Newfoundland dogs are considered the best for their water rescuing abilities and are symbols of bravery and loyalty. Newfoundland dogs are like the people in our lives who can pull us to safety and help us when we need it.

# Healthy Transitions

**Being assertive means staying quiet when something is bothering you.**

False.

Being assertive means that you say what you want, think and feel in an honest and direct way, while being respectful of the other person.

**People don't recover from mental health problems.**

False.

Like any health problem, people recover from mental health problems. It is important, though, to get the proper help. Sometimes people need the help of a counsellor, a social worker, a physician, a psychologist or a psychiatrist in their recovery. They also need the help and support of friends and family, as well as the understanding of co-workers or classmates. Sometimes embarrassment prevents people from getting the help they need. Many people experience a mental health problem in their lives, but with help are able to recover and have full, happy lives.

**Being a good friend can sometimes mean breaking a confidence to make sure a friend gets help.**

True.

Sometimes friends tell you how badly they are feeling; they may be hurting themselves, or are thinking about hurting themselves. They may have had thoughts of suicide. It is very important to share this information with an adult you trust. A friend in this situation needs help, too much help for a friend to be expected to give. That's what being a Newfoundland dog is all about. When friends are struggling, they can't always see the best way out.

**Positive coping can make negative emotions even worse.**

False.

Positive coping describes the things you do that:

- help you to feel better;
- respects others and property; and
- helps you to solve the problem.

**If you are assertive, you will always get what you want.**

False.

If you are assertive, you may not always get what you want, but you will keep good relationships with your friends, parents/guardians and teachers. People will be more willing to listen to you, you will earn the respect of others, and you will increase your chances of being heard, and getting what you need. You'll also feel better about yourself!

# Healthy Transitions

## **The way we talk and listen has a big impact on our relationships.**

True.

Listening attentively to others gives the message that we care about them, and that what they say is important to us. Being assertive can help you work out every day conflicts without damaging relationships. Being assertive also tells others that we will stick up for ourselves, so that we earn respect.

## **Talking to ourselves in a positive way can help us to get through life's struggles.**

True.

This does take practice, though. Trying to use more positive self talk when we're faced with a tough situation can help us do the things we need to do to work through the problem. For example, if you fail a test; instead of telling yourself that you're stupid, remind yourself that you just did badly on a test. If you've done badly on a test, what can you do? You can study more, ask to re-take the test or get the help you need to understand the material.

## Healthy Transitions

**True!**

**False!**

# Healthy Transitions

## Optional culminating activities

Culminating activities are an opportunity for students to consolidate their learning and reflect on how their ideas have changed over the course of the program. Below are some optional culminating activities that teachers may choose to utilize with their students. Please note: these are not part of the four Healthy Transitions sessions and will require additional class time to complete. Facilitators may choose one activity or combine two or more activities to enhance student learning/reflection.

### Activity 1: Healthy Transitions Reflection Tree

**Materials Needed: Coloured construction paper, scissors**

**Instructions:**

1. Ask students to create a large tree trunk using construction paper and place on the wall in the classroom.
2. Ask students to trace their hand on a piece of coloured construction paper and cut it out.
3. Ask students to answer one of the following questions by writing their answer in the hand cutout:
  - What messages did you take away from the Healthy Transitions program?
  - What are some positive ways to keep yourself healthy?
  - What positive coping technique works for you?



# Healthy Transitions

## Activity 2: Healthy Transitions Class Quiz

**Materials Needed:** laptop, projector, screen

**Instructions:**

1. Ask students to create a quiz in a group of 4-5 students. Quiz must have four questions developed from the Healthy Transitions program content. Students can use handouts received to create questions.

Students can:

- use an online survey application (like Kahoot); or
- have each group present their questions.

## Activity 3: Healthy Transitions Positive Coping Board

**Materials Needed:** see below

**Instructions:**

1. Ask students to create a positive coping board: take photos of things that help you cope and regularly add them your classroom board. E.g. relaxing music, photo of sunset, quote, etc.

Options include:

- Class photo album/scrapbook,
- Display board in classroom or school; and
- Pinterest board (Teacher to make a class Pinterest Board and provide username and password to all students).

## Activity 4: Positive Support Networks

**Materials Needed:** see below

**Background:** A strong support network during transition to secondary school is vital for young people to feel supported and connected during this challenging time. A support network could include friends, siblings, parents, relatives, teachers, coaches, faith leaders and others. This lesson helps students to understand the role support networks play in improving their well-being.

**Objectives:** Students will learn about support networks, including what they are, why they are important, who is part of their support network, and how this can help them through challenging times.

# Healthy Transitions

Students will:

- Define support networks
- Identify people in their support network
- Explain the role of a support network
- Identify where to access in the community or online for extra support

**Instructions: (select one)**

1. Class brainstorm: Support networks

- On white board: Ask students what is a support network? Add key words to the board as students answer (examples: people who care about you, people you go to when you need help, etc.)
- Why is a support network important? Discuss role of support network. Add key words to the board as students answer.
- Identify where to access in the community or online for extra support.

2. Self-reflection activity:

- In notebook get students to identify who is part of their support network (e.g., friends, parents/caregivers, extended family, faith leaders, coaches, teachers, etc.).
- If students are having difficulty identifying supportive adults, have student reflect on a person they could reach out to.

## Activity 5: Transition to High School

**Materials Needed: see below**

**Purpose:** To apply learnings from the Healthy Transitions program to support students with preparing for the transition to high school, and support students with identifying support networks in the high school setting.

Students will:

- Discuss feelings about starting high school
- Discuss possible stressors about starting high school
- Identify people who can be part of their support network
- Learn about supports available to students in the high school setting

**Activity:** Thoughts, feelings and actions or classroom discussion

1. Ask students: How do you feel about starting high school next year? What are some things you are excited about? Worried about?



## Healthy Transitions

2. Pick 2-3 examples of things people are worried about. Group students together and use the ['Thoughts, Feelings and Actions: Change one and you can change them all' handout](#) from Session 1.
3. Have students problem-solve how to change the thoughts, feelings, and actions into something positive or encouraging.
4. Group discussion:
  - Discuss some of the supports available to students in high school. Brainstorm with the class. Share some possible supports, including: older students (LINC leaders: grade 11 students who welcome grade 9 students during orientation or provide support during the grade 9 year); Child and Youth Counsellor (CYC); School Social Worker; School Chaplain; teachers; librarians; guidance counsellors and other support staff; sport coaches and club leaders, etc.

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Call 311 or email  
[schoolhealth@halton.ca](mailto:schoolhealth@halton.ca)

