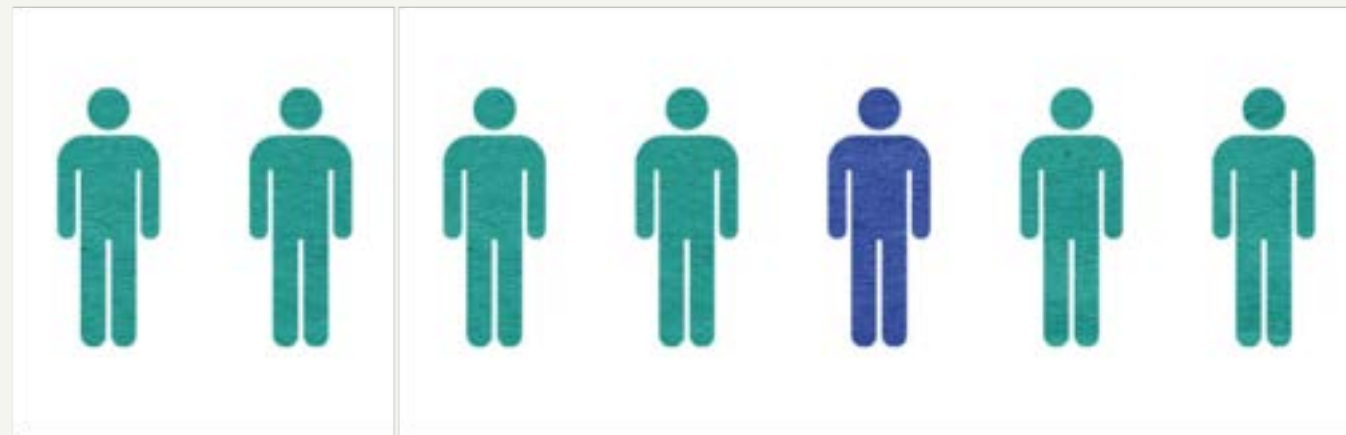




Mental health literacy in schools

Laura Juríková

School mental health - why?



1 in 7 children and adolescents experience
psychological problems

50 %

of mental health problems
are established by the age
of 14 and 75 % by the age
of 24



School mental health

- school is an ideal place to address mental health of young people (Mcluckie et al., 2014)
- school environment can be positive, but also negative -> positive/ negative impact on students/ teachers
- effect on children's development (Jorm, 2012)
- academic environments characterized by high demands are associated with increased prevalence of risk behaviors and mental health problems in students (McLaughlin & Clarke, 2010; Aldridge & McChesney, 2018; Harding et al., 2019)
- schools that develop poor relationships tend to lead to depression and absenteeism not only in students but also among teachers (Weare, 2000)
- **key to mental health promotion, early identification of possible symptoms of mental health problems, early intervention and ongoing care**

School mental health

- ideal foundation is mental health literacy (MHL) (Kutcher et al., 2016)
- general lack of standardization of mental health education in school settings (Kelly et al., 2007)
- teaching MHL = expanding young people's understanding of their own mental health and the support available (Marinucci et al., 2023)
- integrating the topic of mental health within school can help students to better cope with their feelings or challenging situations, decrease stigma and increase positive help-seeking behavior
- universal and targeted interventions seem to be the most effective even when it comes to suicide prevention (Calear et al., 2016)
- positive school climate reduce the negative effects of stress and help children to learn better (Darling-Hammond & Cook-Harvey, 2018)

School mental health

- teachers are well positioned to participate in students' well-being (Lubman et al., 2016)
- supportive and trusting relationships between students and teachers can foster resilience
- good relationships -> sense of belonging and connectedness -> better academic outcomes, emotional well-being and social development
- role model
- adequate training is needed for teachers when implementing MHL in school (Durlak et al., 2011)
- cost-effective, sustainable, inexpensive and also it leads to an increase in teachers' MHL too
- **teachers are not meant to compensate for professional mental health care**

School-based mental health interventions

- school-based interventions claimed to be effective in promoting knowledge, reducing stigma and enhancing help-seeking behaviors, but there is still lack of evidence of effectiveness (Wei et al., 2013)
- can be delivered by internal or external people
- usually lead to an increase of MHL not only students, but teachers as well
- ideally whole-school approach (WHO, 2021)
- preferably integrated into the school curriculum (Fazel et al., 2014)
- supporting teachers' skills and confidence is necessary

School-based mental health interventions

- but it is also about the teachers themselves

70 %

About 60 to 70 % of all teachers repeatedly show stress symptoms and at least 30 % of all teachers show distinct burnout symptoms

28 %

of teachers suffer from severe emotional exhaustion

40 %

feel low levels of personal accomplishment

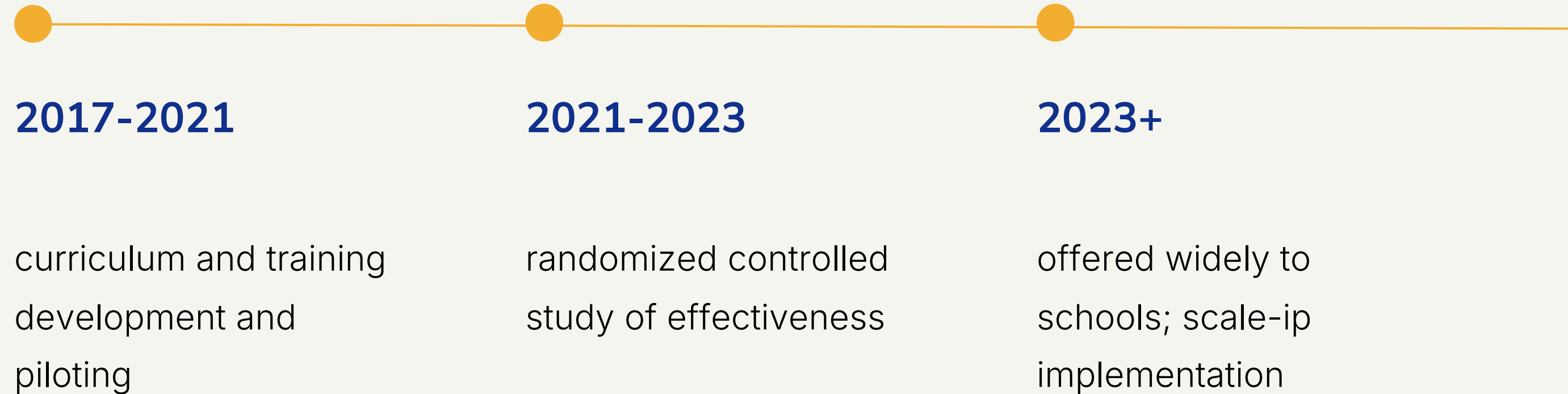
Mental health literacy

- evolved from health literacy
- originally... *"knowledge and beliefs about mental disorders which aid their recognition, management or prevention"* (Jorm, 1997)
- elaborated by **Kutcher et al. (2016)**:
 - **understanding how to gain and maintain good mental health**
 - **understanding mental illness and its treatment**
 - **reducing stigma associated with mental illness**
 - **increasing the effectiveness of help-seeking**
- today: *the knowledge and skills that individuals need to achieve positive mental health*, general shift to more salutogenic perspective
- it is the foundation for mental health promotion, prevention, intervention and ongoing care
- poor MHL is the basic barrier to help-seeking behavior and increasing poor mental health problems -> delayed help (Jorm, 2012; Ratnayake et al., 2019; Bonabi et al., 2016)



UNIVERSAL MENTAL HEALTH LITERACY PROGRAM FOR YOUNG ADOLESCENTS AGED 11-13 YEARS OLD

- it aims to promote mental health and well-being of both students and teachers
- based on MHL and SEL
- 18 lesson plans taught using a variety of teaching methods
- students: journals
- teachers: teacher training, manual, continual support and supervisions
- trainers: ToT model -> online training followed by f2f training, handbook for teacher training, methodology for teacher trainers



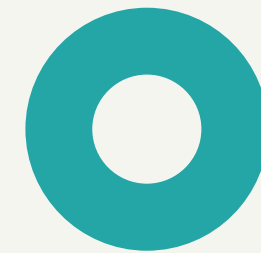
On My Mind Curriculum



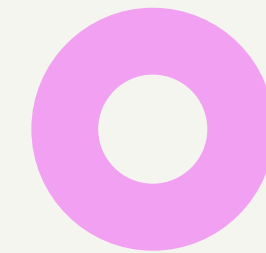
evidence-based



collaborative



positive



sustainable

RESEARCH ARTICLE

WILEY

Applying a theory of change approach to develop and pilot a universal mental health literacy curriculum for adolescents

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Funding information

RSJ foundation, Grant/Award Numbers: NP-038-2010, NP-018-2018; EEA Grants/Norway Grants, Grant/Award Number: ZD-ZDOVA1-025

Abstract

Universal evidence-based prevention and promotion programs lack in availability and scalability for child and adolescent mental health in Central and Eastern Europe. This paper describes the process of applying the theory of change to plan, develop, and pilot a mental health literacy intervention in Czech schools. The process of using theory of change to develop a complex intervention for mental health literacy is described across three stages: formative development, piloting, and evaluation. The application of evidence-based intervention was discussed within 64 diverse stakeholder meetings and tested over 2 years of piloting. The resulting theory of change map is described in the context of consideration for modifications, revisions, and recommendations for successful implementation of the developed intervention. Continued monitoring and evaluation and a formal evaluation of the effectiveness of mental health literacy curriculum within the region will be essential before scale-up.

KEYWORDS

adolescent health, education, implementation science, intervention development, mental health literacy, public health, theory of change

1 | INTRODUCTION

The Sustainable Development Goal target 3.4, the World Health Organization's Global Strategy for Women's, Children's, and Adolescents' Health 2016–2020–2030 and the Global Accelerated Action for the Health of Adolescents implementation guidance have increased commitments toward improving adolescents' mental health. Schools are recognized as an ideal platform for universal interventions, offering optimal feasibility, cost-effectiveness,

scalability, and equity (Knapp et al., 2007; Patel et al., 2018; Rampazzo et al., 2016).

Included among the World Health Organization's most recent top five recommendations toward helping adolescents thrive are interventions to promote positive mental health, prevent mental disorders, self-harm, and suicide, and reduce risky behaviors (WHO, 2020). Progress in the field of mental health has been limited in the region of Central and Eastern Europe (Winkler et al., 2017). However, recent nation-wide reform initiatives are underway, and

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Evidence-based interventions in OMM

- breathing
- mindfulness
- stress management
- conflict management
- empathy
- universal CBT
- healthy communication strategies
- relaxation techniques
- gratitude and kindness
- journaling
- emotional literacy
- healthy relationships
- holistic model of health
- sleep hygiene
- positive self-esteem

Social emotional learning

- the process by which an individual acquires and applies the knowledge, attitudes and skills necessary to:
 - be able to recognise and manage emotions
 - set and achieve goals
 - feel and show empathy towards others
 - establish and maintain healthy relationships
 - make responsible decisions





*Cambridge Prisms: Global
Mental Health*

www.cambridge.org/gmh

Overview Review

Cite this article: Kågström A, Juríková L, Guerrero Z (2023). Developmentally appropriate mental health literacy content for school-aged children and adolescents. *Cambridge Prisms: Global Mental Health*, 10, e25, 1–11
<https://doi.org/10.1017/gmh.2023.16>

Received: 17 September 2022

Revised: 22 February 2023

Accepted: 26 April 2023

Keywords:

Mental health; education; child development; mental health literacy; schools

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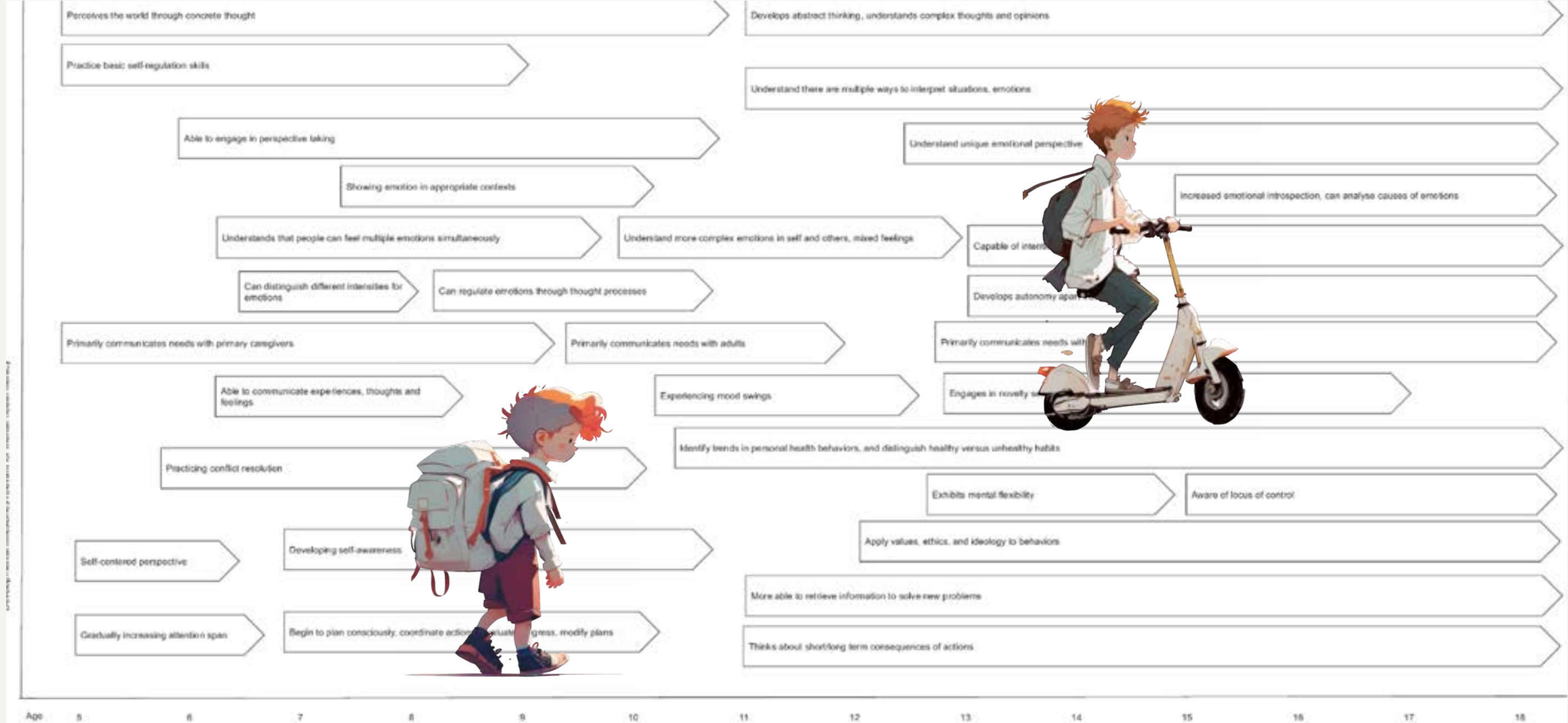
Developmentally appropriate mental health literacy content for school-aged children and adolescents

Anna Kågström^{1,2} , Laura Juríková^{1,3}  and Zoe Guerrero^{1,2} 

¹Department of Public Mental Health, National Institute of Mental Health, Klecany, Czech Republic; ²WHO Collaborating Center for Public Mental Health Research and Service Development, National Institute of Mental Health, Klecany, Czech Republic and ³Department of Psychology, Faculty of Arts, Charles University, Prague, Czech Republic

Abstract

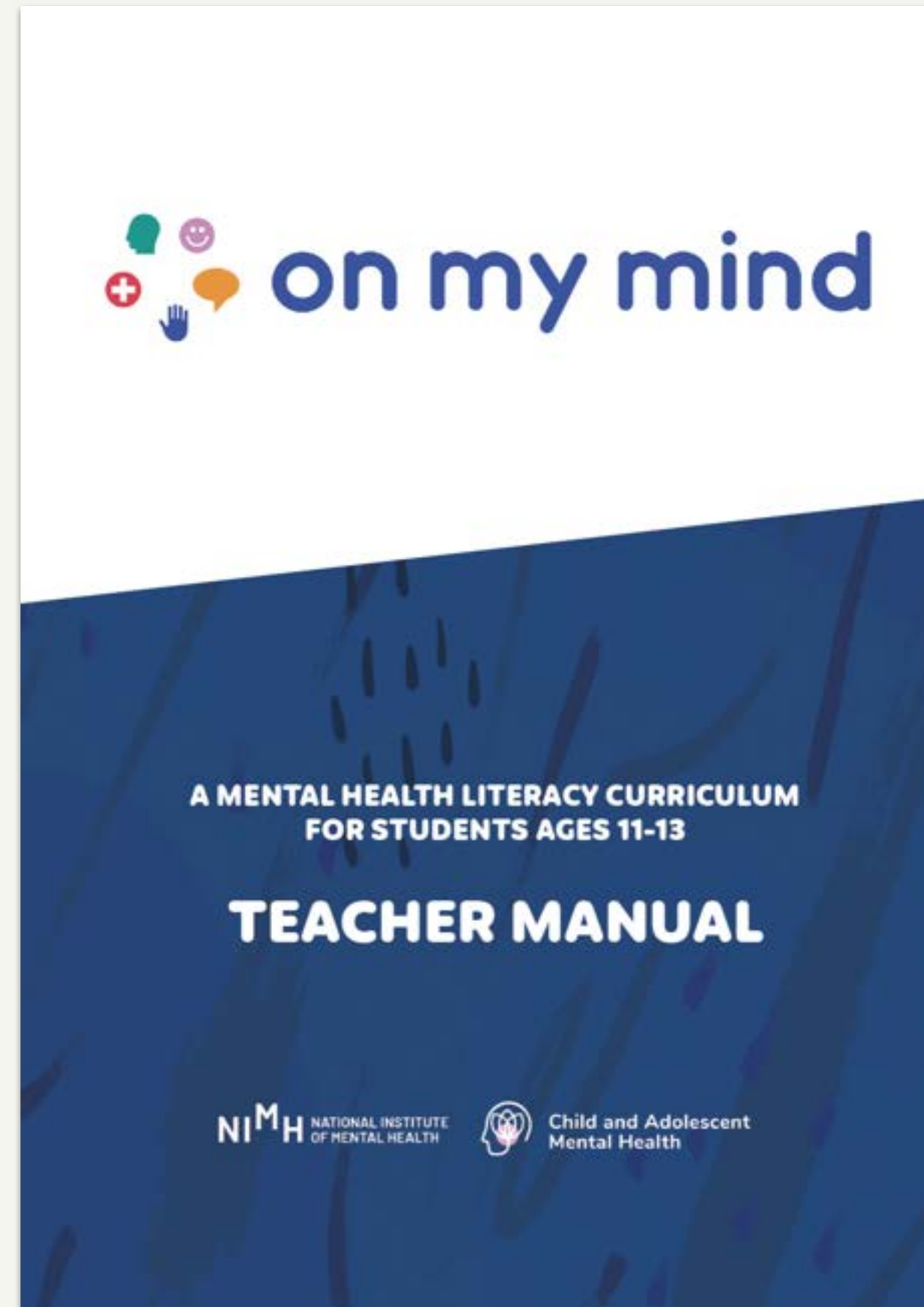
Although improving the mental health of children and adolescents has become a global priority, resources outlining developmentally appropriate content for improving mental health literacy (MHL) across school-aged children are scarce. A comprehensive, life-course approach to building MHL is needed to address the evolving competencies, needs, capacities, and risk factors for mental health, especially to establish school-based interventions that can be equitably and sustainably implemented. We conducted a theoretical review highlighting the relation of research and practice in building MHL through developmentally appropriate knowledge and competencies for children and adolescents. A two-pronged review of the literature was conducted to provide an overview of (1) research with a focus on neurobiological, psychological, cognitive, and social developmental milestones of school-aged children relevant for building MHL and (2) evidence-based and theory-driven content for the development of universal MHL interventions for children and adolescents considering the four components of MHL. A map of relevant key milestones highlights the range of development that occurs and ample opportunity for increasing universal MHL during these sensitive years primed for learning. We reflect on current understandings and global considerations for MHL interventions with an emphasis on applying developmental science to the future strengthening of intervention development, uptake, adaptation, implementation, evaluation, and scale-up.



- Understanding a holistic concept of health
- Demonstrating basic problem-solving
- Understanding and perceiving a various range of emotions as normal
- Practicing identifying and regulating emotions with support from adults
- Learning about tolerance, empathy, acceptance of diversity
- Recognizing a wide range of emotions and their presentation in the body
- Developing self-regulation
- Recognizing sources of mental health support (parents, teachers, mental health professionals, etc) and exposure to local examples
- Recognizing emotional states and fluctuations across a few days (i.e. yesterday, today, and tomorrow)
- Communicating emotions and needs
- Building empathy (practicing perspective taking)
- Recognizing importance of asking adult for help when feeling low
- Identify strong emotions and solutions through appropriate help-seeking
- Demonstrating self-awareness of acute mental health status (i.e. identifying emotions when prompted)
- Having safe adult contacts for help-seeking
- Recognizing external factors affecting one's mental health (e.g. emotions, thoughts, behavior, relationship with self and others, healthy lifestyle, environmental factors)
- Practicing and establishing self-care and healthy coping mechanisms (e.g. positive self-talk and thinking patterns, basic breathing techniques, enjoyable activities, mindfulness, exercise, relaxation)
- Understanding principles of healthy relationships (e.g. voluntariness, honesty, reliability and trust)
- Linking brain development to mental health (e.g. biology of emotions, hormones, stress response)
- Demonstrating self-awareness of mental health status over time (e.g. changes in mood, behavior, thoughts, lifestyle, stressors)
- Understanding distinction between mental health problems vs mental illnesses
- Knowledge of basic prevalence for mental illness and basic etiology
- Recognizing broad signs and symptoms of mental health problems (non-diagnosis specific) and when to seek help (e.g. when signs and symptoms impact feeling and functioning over time)
- Perspective taking and empathy building for a range of mental health states
- Communicating symptoms of personal mental health problems
- Develop empathetic understanding of experiences of people with mental illnesses
- Knowledge of available support in local community, trusted adults, school resources, helplines
- Understanding the roles of mental health professionals and principle of confidentiality within mental health care
- Understanding mental health problems often require support and mental illnesses are treatable (principle of recovery)
- Responding to barriers of help-seeking by trying alternative solutions
- Learning an appropriate and safe role in help-giving for peers in mental distress or disclosing mental health problems (e.g. never promising secrets, supportive conversation, active listening, engaging with an adult when needed)
- Setting and maintaining short and long-term strategies and goals for mental health and self-care
- Understanding universal protective and risk factors for mental health across the lifespan
- Learning basic knowledge of common mental illnesses (e.g. depression, anxiety, etc.)
- Learning about different treatment options and their principles (e.g. psychotherapy, pharmacotherapy)
- Understanding differences in mental health problems requiring self-help, informal help and formal help
- Increasing knowledge about human brain development
- Being self-aware of mental health status over time and identifying contributing factors
- Self-identifying personal risk and protective factors for mental well-being
- Engage in health promoting habits and decrease negative coping mechanisms
- Communicating specific symptoms when help-seeking and associated stressors
- Persistent self-advocating when help-seeking (e.g. anticipating and actively overcoming barriers)
- Ability to recognize mental distress in others and reacting appropriately (e.g. support in seeking help, conversation)



Manual



Themes, lesson plans

 Mental health	1: Health 2: Mental health 3: Brain and hormones 4: Stress in our bodies	Students are introduced to the program and learn about mental well-being and the effect of stress and hormones on mental health.
 Emotional literacy	5: Emotions 6: Emotional regulation 7: Thoughts 8: Behavior	Students learn to notice and name their emotions and thoughts and recognize the impact of thoughts and emotions on behavior. Students are guided in practices improving their ability to regulate their emotions and behavior.
 Relationships	9: Knowing myself 10: Relationship with others 11: Building empathy	Students realize the importance of relationships both with self and others, and learn healthy relationship skills including developing and practicing empathy, respect, and kindness.
 Communication	12: Communication basics 13: Communicating emotions 14: Healthy communication	Students deepen their communication skills, learn to better deal with conflicts and challenging situations and realize their agency in behaviors and communication strategies.
 Mental health first aid	15: It's OK not to be OK 16: Mental health care 17: Seeking help 18: My mental health plan	Students learn signs and symptoms of mental health problems, types of mental health care, and help-seeking knowledge and resources. In the end, each student creates an individualized mental health plan.



Manual - topics

Each topic begins with theory

theme 2

EMOTIONAL LITERACY

The aim of theme 2 is to improve emotional regulation of students through managing strong emotions, thoughts and reducing stress. Lessons focus on the interconnectedness of emotions, thoughts and behaviors, and explore how they interact with each other and impact mental health and well-being.

Learning objectives

Students will:

- understand the function of emotions
- learn how emotional responses can vary from person to person
- understand the link between behavior and thoughts and emotions
- learn the practice of observing and influencing their thoughts, emotions, and behaviors
- practice challenging negative thinking patterns

Emotional literacy

Emotional literacy is the ability to accurately identify, label and regulate emotions in different situations. Emotional regulation is an important ability to express and regulate one's own emotions, and is also regarded as an important component of mental health. It also helps in managing strong emotions, thoughts or stress and it is a key element in preventing the onset of mental illness. The way we interpret or think about a situation determines how we feel about it which then determines how we will behave. Through identifying, understanding and managing emotions we support emotional intelligence that fosters a healthy well-being and promotes other benefits, such as: greater empathy and self-awareness, quality relationships, sensing the emotional needs of others (important for theme 5), achieving or personal goals.

Emotions, thoughts and behaviors

This whole system can be very fast and often runs completely automatically. The practice of observance taught in OMM aims to improve students' awareness of what is happening in real time. This provides the opportunity to influence internal processes and challenge automatic responses. The curriculum seeks to encourage students to work consciously with their internal processes, and gain self-control and a sense of responsibility and agency in how they choose to act.

theme 2

Emotions are defined as subjective internal feeling states that can be expressed through behavior, thoughts and body. There are basic emotions such as happiness, sadness, fear, anger, disgust and surprise, but also more complex emotions such as guilt, jealousy or excitement. Emotions are triggered by stimuli as a result of our thoughts about a situation. They often arise because our needs are being met or unmet and may range from comfortable to uncomfortable. Feelings of adolescents are as complex and nuanced as an adult's, but adolescents may lack the awareness and vocabulary to detect and discuss these complexities. Adolescents can experience emotional rollercoasters and mood swings because they are in the middle of their developmental changes and we know that emotions affect the executive functions (such as thinking, planning, focusing attention, problem solving). When experiencing emotions, our body undergoes a number of physiological changes (e.g., sweating, tensing of muscles, increased heart rate, crying, laughing...). All emotions are natural, some of them may be more pleasant than others. Every feeling gives us information.

In theme 2, students learn more about how our thoughts make interpretations about the world around us. Many of our thoughts become easily automatic which means we are not able to assess it for accuracy. We unconsciously accept the thought as a fact, truth, and move on. This can lead to an unpleasant emotion without even realizing why or so-called thinking traps. When we interpret a situation with thoughts and emotions, we respond with behavior. Feeling overwhelming emotions can lead to being reactive in our behavior more than active. Students learn that even if we cannot change the situation, we can change the way we think about it and therefore the way we feel and behave. Discovering how to identify our thinking and change our thoughts is a crucial step in dealing with stress and difficult feelings.

Mindfulness

Mindfulness is the ability to consciously experience the presence without judgment. Being mindful means being fully aware of what is happening right now, and how it makes us feel. We observe our thoughts and feelings and we can recognize that specific thoughts may lead to specific feelings, and that some feelings may lead to feeling overwhelmed. It has been shown that people who practice mindfulness regularly are calmer and happier. There are huge benefits to our overall functioning and mental health, such as stress reduction, better working memory, reduced symptoms of anxiety and depression, reduced emotional reactivity or improved learning process.

Grounding

Grounding is a very simple and powerful tool that brings us into the present moment. It means we are guiding our attention away from thoughts about past, destabilizing experiences, and guiding it towards present safety. It helps us to break recursive cycle of anxious thoughts, return to present, reset our mind, lower the level of cortisol, sleep better or promote overall healing. When we want to ground ourselves in the present, we can for example try deep breathing, take a mindful walk, mindfully enjoy a drink or use our 5 senses.



Manual - lesson plan

Each lesson begins with a ritual - a breathing exercise that is always the same.

"I am pleasantly surprised how the students have embraced the initial tune-up (breathing exercise) over time. You can see the improvement with each lesson."

Lesson 4

STRESS IN OUR BODIES

Takeaways

Stress is part of our lives and it can be both positive and negative.

When I feel stressed, my body gives me signals, such as _____ or _____.

One of the ways I can decrease my stress is through square breathing.

INTRODUCTION (10 minutes)

Start the lesson with the breathing ritual.

"Sit comfortably and if you would like to, you can close your eyes or look down at your desk or the floor if that is more comfortable for you. Feel your feet on the ground or your hands and how they are resting. We are going to take 3 deep breaths and exhale slowly while paying attention to our breath. Everyone at their own pace (pause). You can notice how your belly is moving or how the air is going in and out through your nose or lips. If you want to, you can put your hand on your belly to feel the deep inhale and slow exhale (pause). Pay attention to your breathing (pause). Now you can open your eyes slowly."

Give space for students to briefly share the results of their experiments. The students share first in pairs and then there is the opportunity to share something with the whole class.

You might ask for example: How did the experiment go? How was it? Would anyone like to share with others?

Let a few students share with the class, then move on to the next activity.



Manual - lesson plan

Every lesson include a detailed breakdown of the activities and their time allotment.

MAIN CONTENT (30 minutes)

1. Group activity: About stress (10 minutes)

The goal of this activity is to talk about stress and normalize it as an important topic. Students learn that stress can be both positive and negative, and therefore affects our mental health.

"Last week we talked about our brain and hormones. Today, we are going to talk about stress. Stress is a feeling of physical and/ or emotional tension or pressure, often related to some difficult or exciting situation. Stress can make us feel upset, anxious or nervous. For example, you have a deadline for a presentation in school and you start to worry so much that you are not able to focus, feel sick and don't finish it. That's a negative stress that affects our body. Stress can also be positive which means it helps us work harder to get what we want, yet we don't feel overwhelmed or exhausted. In the example with the presentation, stress would help to prepare you well and you would do a good job with the presentation. There are things, activities, people, places or expectations that can trigger stress and it can vary from person to person. Same thing which might be seen as a nightmare to one person, can be seen as an opportunity to others."

Divide the classroom into 2 groups. Label half as "happy hormones", and the other half as "stress hormones". Tell the students to let everyone know which group they belong to with their facial expressions and then have them mix quickly. When you clap your hands, instruct all the students to pair up with someone from the other group. Once the students have paired up, let them sit down.

"In this activity each stress hormone was paired with a happy hormone. It is important to balance our stress out by finding things that bring us happiness. Being mentally healthy does not mean we don't have stress, but that we try to balance the stress with activities that trigger happy hormones. This can be as simple as taking a walk, deep breathing, hanging out with friends, or taking time to do a hobby we love."

Emphasize: Being healthy means balancing our stress with happy hormones.

2. Lecture: Signals from my body (10 minutes)

The goal of this activity is to show your students that stress can manifest through our bodies and give us signals. The parasympathetic and sympathetic nervous system is introduced. The more students understand the concept of this system and fight-or-flight response, the more chance they have to regulate and control their physical and emotional responses.

*"When our body perceives a stressor in our environment, something that threatens our safety or well-being, it reacts through activating a system designed to keep us alive and safe. This system is called the **sympathetic and parasympathetic nervous system**. The sympathetic nervous system prepares our bodies for action and we can experience an increased heart rate,*

*rapid breathing, tensed muscles, racing thoughts, nausea or we can start shaking or sweating. As a result, the sympathetic nervous system triggers a **fight-or-flight response**, which is automatically triggered when we feel threatened or stressed and its goal is to protect us from danger. On the other hand, the parasympathetic system prepares our body to relax, calm down, and enables us to refresh our mental and physical energy. Our body reacts with calm breathing, relaxed muscles, and a slower heartbeat. We can relax, recover, heal and chill because there is no potential danger."*

"Imagine this example: A deer meets a tiger - what does the deer have to do to survive? What would the deer do if it sees the tiger? It can either take on the tiger, or run - these options are often called "fight or flight". Both these survival options require the body of the deer to be active, motivated, energized, and prepared for physical activity. So, the deer's body reacts to prepare it to fight or flee by tensing muscles, stopping digestion, and pumping blood throughout the body faster increasing the deer's heart rate. This reaction which prepares the deer for fight or flight is the sympathetic nervous system. When the deer manages to run from or fight with the tiger, how do you think its body will react? It would then need to recover - and would stop, and take a breath, and relax. In other words, it then needs the parasympathetic nervous system."

"Fight-or-flight response is not bad, we all experience it from time to time, it is natural. It can only cause problems when the response leads to intense emotions, stress that lasts much longer than the threat, or other problems. Sometimes our body perceives a tiger in front of us and for example a class presentation as a stressor. But if the stressor is the class presentation and our body reacts the same way that it would react to a tiger, it can create more harm than good, because we don't need the same activation in our bodies to prepare and give a class presentation as we would to face a tiger. An increased heart rate and sweating might help you escape from a tiger, but they won't do much to help you look cool and collected during a presentation."

"Try to think about what signals your body gives you when you are stressed and write them down in your takeaway. Once we know the signals our bodies show us when we are stressed, we can work towards managing our stress and facing the things we are stressed about."

Emphasize: When I feel stressed, my body gives me signals, such as _____ or _____.

3. Guided activity: Square breathing (10 minutes)

The goal of this activity is to learn that square breathing is one of the most effective tools for calming ourselves down when we feel stressed, anxious or when we want to support our self-control.

For this activity, you can use the supplemental material "Square breathing".

"Long term stress can affect our mental health, that's why we need to balance these two systems. People who learn to handle their stresses in a positive way are able to bounce back more easily after difficult times. We know our body and mind are linked up, as is our physical and mental health. Through



Manual - lesson plan

Every lesson ends with a closing ritual
and a journal entry.

JOURNAL

Being healthy means balancing our stress with happy *hormones*.

When I feel stressed, my body gives me signals, such as _____
_____ or _____.

One of the ways I can decrease my stress is through *square* breathing.

What was the most interesting thing that I discovered, thought,
or learned today?

Did you know...?

We all experience stressors (things that stress us out) in our lives. Being able to realize what the stressors are is the first step to managing them. Sharing this information with close ones can strengthen and support healthy relationships.

Experiment

Try this week to find out more about your stressors and write them down. You can also ask someone you trust about their stressors. You can, for example, ask your sibling, parents or friends. Share with them what usually stresses you out. If you want, you can try to respond to negative stress throughout the week by breathing to kickstart your parasympathetic nervous system.

p. 9

Notes:



Journal

In the journals, students write down 2 key takeaways and 1 personal.

Thoughts

Our _____ and _____ influence each other.

Not all thoughts are _____.

Noticing our thoughts and emotions can help us to _____ with them.

What was the most interesting thing that I discovered, thought, or learned today?

Experiment

This week try to notice your thoughts and catch any negative thoughts you are having. Write down these thoughts and challenge them through these questions:

- ◆ What evidence do I have for this thought?
- ◆ Is there any evidence that does not support my thought?
- ◆ How would my friends react if I shared my negative thought with them? Would they agree?



Did you know...?

Falling into thinking traps can negatively affect your mental health or put you in a bad mood. Noticing our thoughts is a great way to develop a healthier mind.

Behaviors

There's a difference between _____ and _____.

Our _____, _____, physical responses and behaviors are connected.

No matter the situation, we all have a choice over how we _____.

What was the most interesting thing that I discovered, thought, or learned today?

Experiment

This week try setting a small goal for yourself.

My goal is:

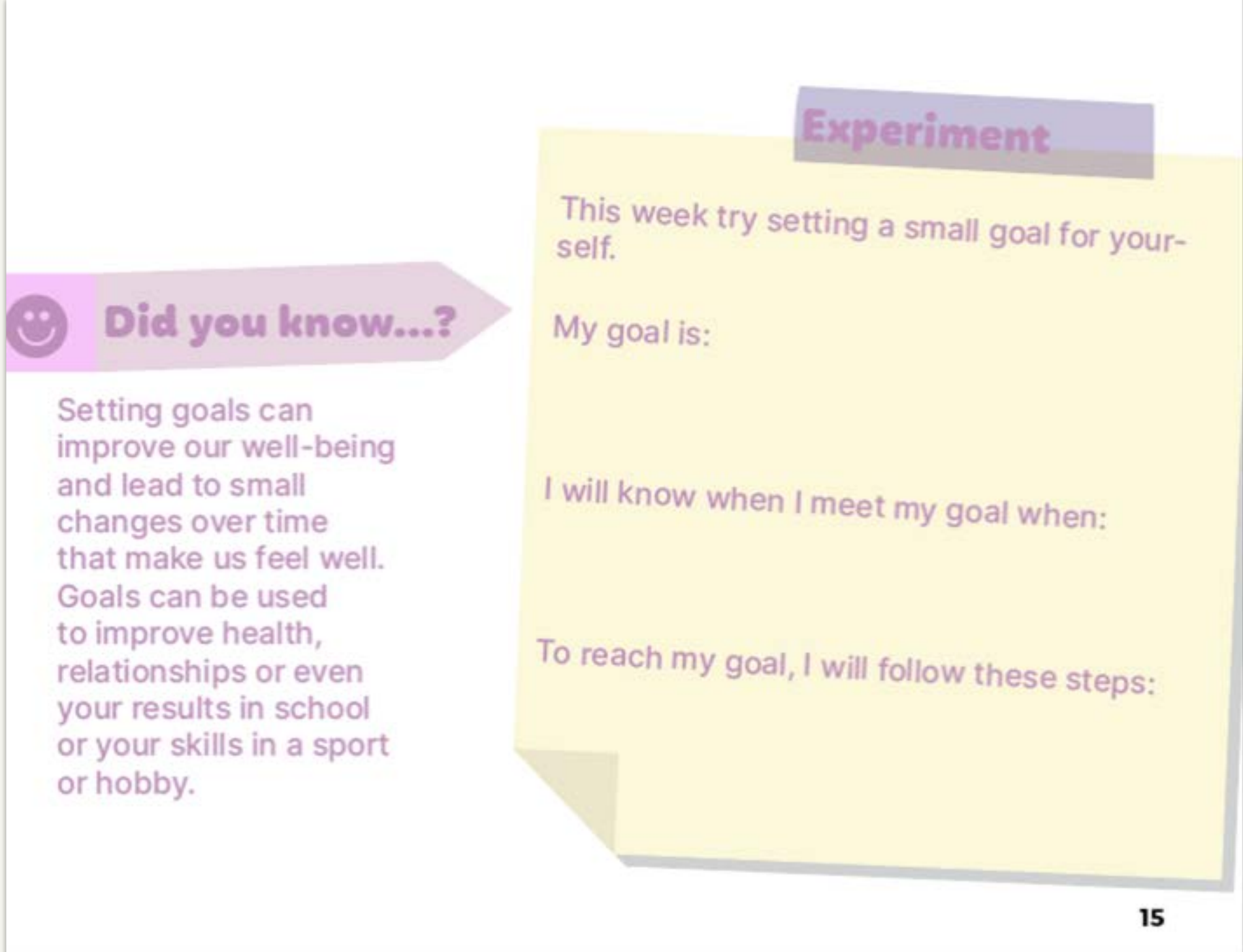
I will know when I meet my goal when:

To reach my goal, I will follow these steps:

Experiments

The experiment is a voluntary activity that students can try at home between lessons.

It is an evidence-based fact following the specific lesson.



Experiment

This week try setting a small goal for yourself.

My goal is:

I will know when I meet my goal when:

To reach my goal, I will follow these steps:

Did you know...?

Setting goals can improve our well-being and lead to small changes over time that make us feel well. Goals can be used to improve health, relationships or even your results in school or your skills in a sport or hobby.

15

Teacher training

- 3 days (24h total), 2 trainers, 10-12 teachers
- introduction to OMM
- OMM theory
- mental health + mental health compass
- theme 1-5 and how to implement it in the classroom
- mental disorders in children and adolescents and the role of the teacher
- the most common mental health problems in students
- OMM tips & tricks

- practical, interactive, lot of space for discussion and hands-on practice

Training of trainers (ToT model)

- online moodle course followed by f2f training
- led by Master trainers
- again: practical, interactive and a lot of space for discussion and practice



The screenshot shows a Moodle course page for 'On My Mind Training of Trainers'. The left sidebar is dark blue with the logo 'NU^DZ NÁRODNÍ ÚSTAV DUŠEVNÍHO ZDRAVÍ' at the top. Below the logo are links for 'Menu' and 'Navigation'. The main content area is light blue and features the course title 'Course: On My Mind Training of Trainers' at the top. Below the title is a breadcrumb trail: 'Home / My courses / V5P Training of trainers'. A list of course topics follows, each preceded by a right-pointing chevron (>): 'Introduction', 'Mental health', 'School mental health', 'Development of children and adolescents', 'Mental health literacy', 'On My Mind', and 'Monitoring and evaluation'. At the bottom of the list is a 'Test' link preceded by a downward-pointing chevron (v).



Additional materials

Materials & Educational Activities

In each section you will find materials that you can use freely in your lessons or as inspiration to improve your mental well-being. You will also find our publications, articles, research outputs, videos and educational activities.



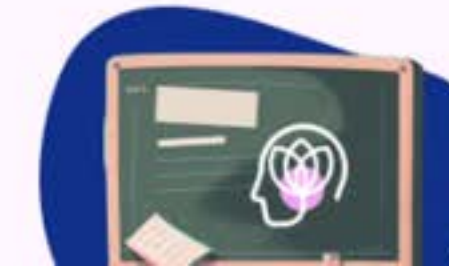
FOR CHILDREN



FOR SCHOOLS



FOR PARENTS



Our experience & how it actually looks like



Topic 1: Mental health

Lesson 1: Health

Lesson 2: Mental health

Lesson 3: Brain and hormones

Lesson 4: Stress in our bodies





Learning objectives

Learning objectives

Students will:

- learn that health consists of mental, social and physical aspects
- understand the importance of taking care of mental health
- understand the role of hormones and brain functioning in mental health
- identify stressors and their bodies response to stress
- learn the practice of breathing as a stress reduction tool

MAIN CONTENT (30 minutes)

1. Open discussion: Mental health (8 minutes)

This introductory activity gives students an opportunity to share their first ideas and thoughts about mental health. It is ok if they come up with terms that are more connected to mental illnesses than mental health, or if some of the discussion points are stigmatizing or false. The goal of this activity is to show that it is normal and healthy to talk about mental health aloud, even though there may be some myths and prejudices that come up.

"We'll start with a question and I'd be happy to hear your ideas and thoughts. Every idea is very welcomed. Here is the question: what are the words that come to your mind when you hear mental health? You can look at your journal from last week and write down more or share what you already brainstormed."

Wait for your students' answers, and challenge them to consider where their ideas come from (e.g., they could have seen in it films or heard about it from someone).

"A lot of our thoughts about mental health can come from other people or movies where the information is not always true. They can be misleading and untrue, for example, that people who struggle with mental health are dangerous."

Emphasize: Talking about mental health is important.

DEVELOPMENTAL NORMS IN ADOLESCENCE

Adolescence is a stage in life, when a child becomes an independent and self-sufficient adult. Definitions vary, however, it is roughly between 10 and 19 years of age. This period can be challenging for teenagers, their families, and teachers. It is a time where hormonal changes occur, which are often perceived to be the cause of adolescent moodiness and unpredictable behavior. Nonetheless, it is also a unique period of opportunities and challenges for positive development.

At times you might notice that your teenager's behavior looks very mature and adult-like, but other times his or her behavior seems rather immature or illogical. From a biological point of view, we know that the brain continues to grow and develop until early adulthood. The specificity for the age and different regions of the brain are changing at different rates. While the more impulsive and emotional part of the brain (the limbic system) speeds up in its development, the part of our brain that allows us to think about the future, to understand consequences, and generally make better decisions (the prefrontal cortex) grows much slower. It's typically at 25 years of age when the brain finishes the period of adolescence and its long process of structural development.

This developmental phase is characterized by various factors such as increased emotions, self-consciousness, self-questioning, inner conflicts, stress, uncertainty, and disorientation which causes a threat to the stability of the self and identity. That being said, teenagers are not children anymore, therefore, more tasks and responsibilities are required from them. Added to those processes, there are also first love or rejection experiences, the desire to belong somewhere, the effect of parents' possible quarrels or higher pressure on performance. All of this could lead to more stress, which is often not easy to handle, especially given all of the hormonal changes that are occurring.



HAPPY HORMONES and how to boost them

DOPAMIN "reward hormone"

- spend time with people who treat you well
- celebrate achieving a goal
- finish a task
- enjoy small victories



OXYTOCIN "love hormone"

- play with animals
- spend time with friends
- hug someone
- tell someone what they mean to you



SEROTONIN "satisfaction hormone"

- laugh
- sleep well
- spend time in the sun
- go running or swimming



ENDORFIN "good mood hormone"

- do something creative
- watch a comedy movie
- eat dark chocolate
- get some exercise



STRESS HORMONES and what they can cause

CORTISOL

- increases muscle tension and blood pressure
- causes mood swings
- increases junk food cravings

ADRENALINE

- prepares the body for action
- activates "fight or flight"
- reduces the body's sensitivity to pain

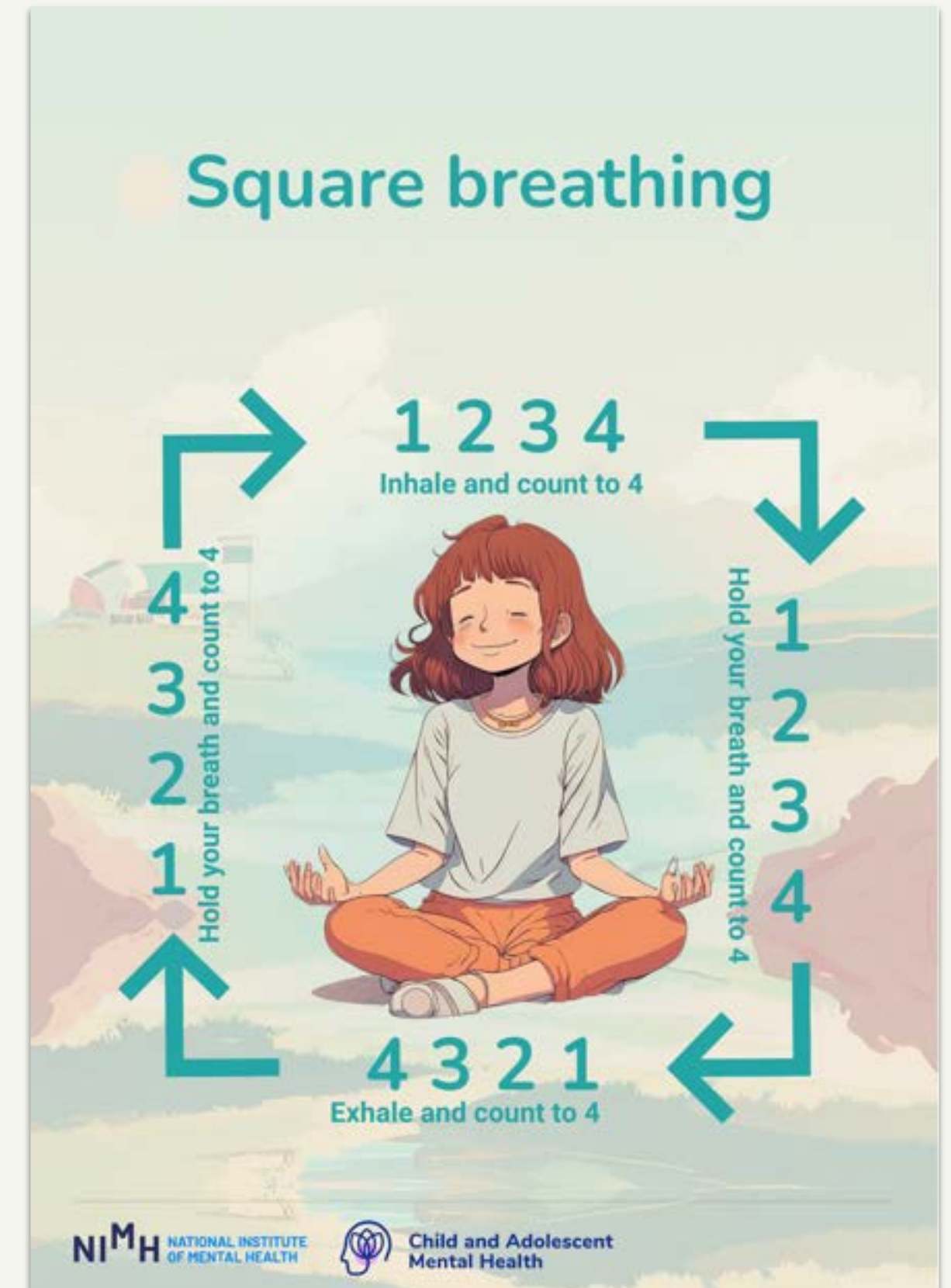


3. Guided activity: Square breathing (10 minutes)

The goal of this activity is to learn that square breathing is one of the most effective tools for calming ourselves down when we feel stressed, anxious or when we want to support our self-control.

For this activity, you can use the supplemental material “Square breathing”.

“Long term stress can affect our mental health, that's why we need to balance these two systems. People who learn to handle their stresses in a positive way are able to bounce back more easily after difficult times. We know our body and mind are linked up, as is our physical and mental health. Through



Topic 2: Emotional literacy

Lesson 5: Emotions

Lesson 6: Emotional regulation

Lesson 7: Thoughts

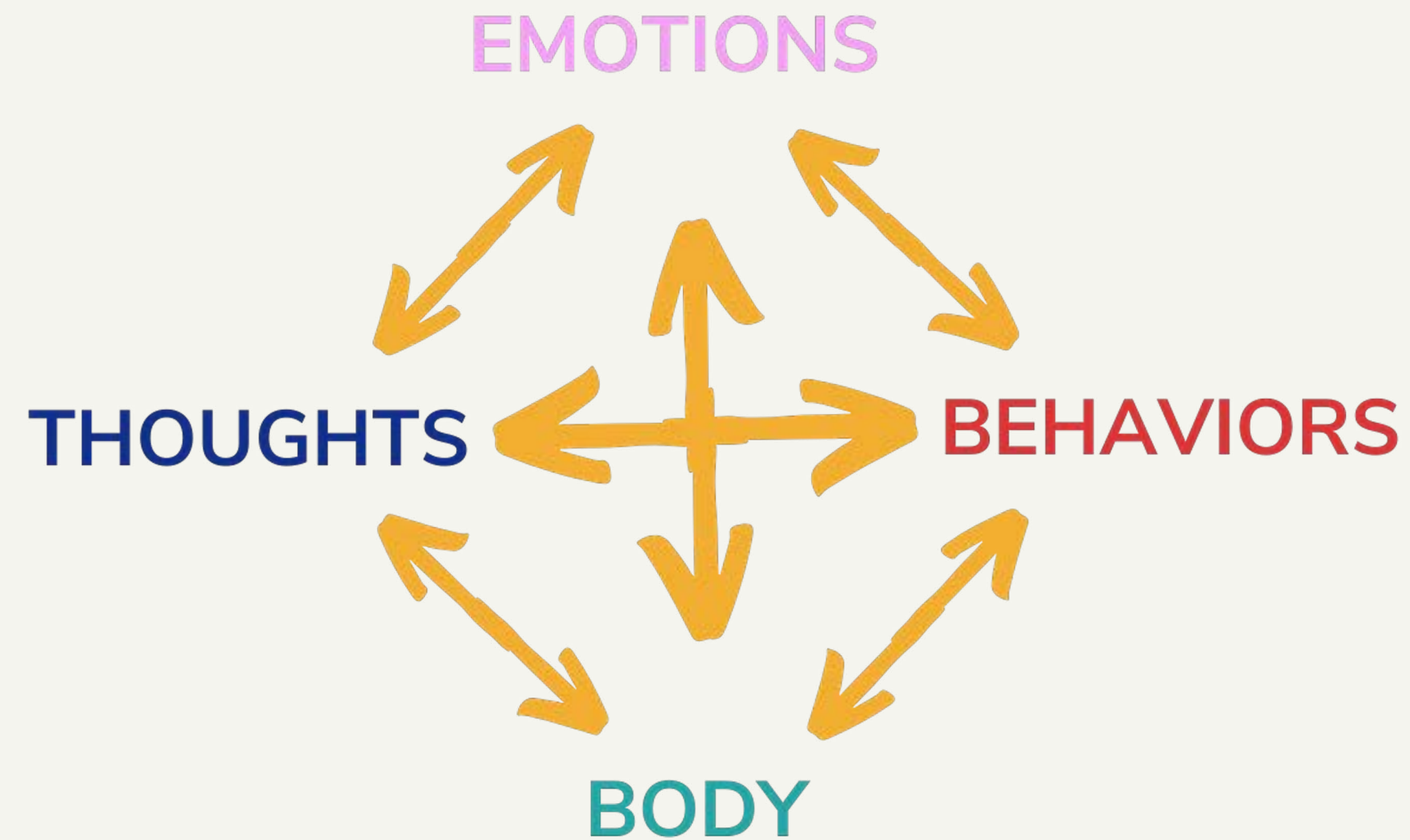
Lesson 8: Behaviour



Learning objectives

Students will:

- understand the function of emotions
- learn how emotional responses can vary from person to person
- understand the link between behavior and thoughts and emotions
- learn the practice of observing and influencing their thoughts, emotions, and behaviors
- practice challenging negative thinking patterns



recognising, naming and
regulating emotions in different
situations

mental health strengthening

self-awareness

quality relationships

achieving personal goals

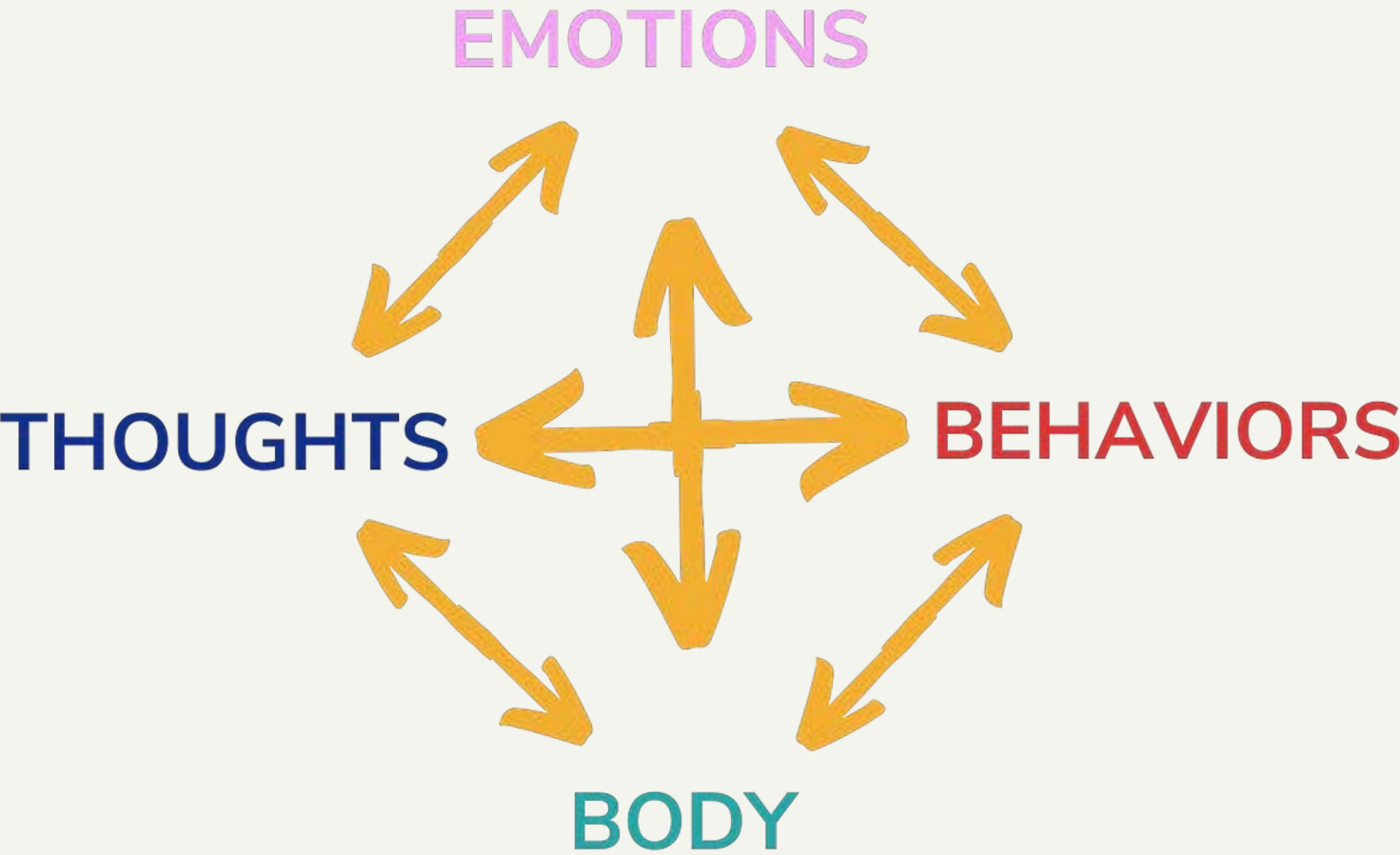
greater empathy

3. Class activity: Grounding (8 minutes)

The goal of this activity is to adopt a mechanism of imagination to use whenever students feel overwhelmed by their emotions.

For this activity, you can use the supplemental material "5-4-3-2-1 Ground yourself".





Topic 3: Relationships

Lesson 9: Knowing myself

Lesson 10: Relationships with others

Lesson 11: Building empathy





Learning objectives

Students will:

- understand and notice self-talk as an important contributor to mental health and well-being
- learn the practice of self-compassion through healthy self-talk
- identify shared values in their relationships
- identify the relationships which most contribute to their support system
- build empathy through practicing perspective taking



1. Individual activity: My relationships (8 minutes)

The goal of this activity is to raise awareness about the importance of relationships and which ones are the most important.

"Today we will talk about relationships with other people and the value they bring into our lives. But first, you'll take a piece of paper and in the middle, you will draw a bubble with your name. Then think about the relationships you have and draw them in the bubbles around you - there can be people from your family, your friends from school or somewhere else, or other important adults or peers. Anyone who is important to you should be mentioned on the paper. Maybe someone will be closer to you than others, and that's ok. You will keep this paper to yourself."

Give your students proper time.

"Tell students straight up that relationships can be challenging even in adulthood. Emphasize that you always need to start with yourself and not expect all the effort from others. Tell them to think about what kind of relationships they would like to have with people, or why they are not achieving this. Don't be a teacher who just passes on information, but rather a storyteller who talks about life in a comfortable setting."

Topic 4: Communication

Lesson 12: Communication basics

Lesson 13: Communicating emotions

Lesson 14: Healthy communication



Students will:

- understand that communication affects both mental health and our relationships
- understand and practice listening to others effectively
- practice expressing needs, opinions, and emotions effectively
- understand the impact of strong emotions on communication
- practice conflict resolution through healthy communication

2. Lecture & role-playing: I-statements (15 minutes)

The goal of this activity is to teach students to use I-statements in communication with others, so that they can express how they themselves feel in the situation instead of blaming others.

“One way we can control our emotions when we talk to other people is through so-called I-statements. I-statements are a simple way of speaking that help us communicate our feelings and needs without blaming others. An I-statement has 3 parts:

- *information about what we're feeling right now,*
- *information about the reason for our feelings,*
- *information about what we need.”*

Topic 5: Mental health first aid

Lesson 15: It's OK not to be OK

Lesson 16: Mental health care

Lesson 17: Seeking Help

Lesson 18: My Mental Health Plan



Students will:

- identify signs and symptoms indicating mental health problems
- gain confidence and communication skills for seeking help, for oneself or others
- understand that mental health care looks different for everyone
- understand that mental illness is treatable
- have knowledge of local resources for mental health service



Lesson 15

IT'S OK NOT TO BE OK

Takeaways

Knowing when we are not OK is the first step to getting better.

Struggling to cope with feelings for a couple of weeks can be a sign of poor mental well-being.

A change in the ability to keep up with daily life activities can be a sign of poor mental well-being.

Additional materials

- video





Lesson 18

MY MENTAL HEALTH PLAN

***In this lesson, there are no takeaways for the students.
The goal of this lesson is to create their own mental
health plan and develop personal strategies for
preventing mental health problems.***



My mental health plan

Three things I will do to take care of my mental health are:

Three signs that my mental health needs more care are:

If I'm having a hard time asking for help, here are some sentences I can use with someone I trust

- ◆ I need to tell you something that is not easy for me...
- ◆ Can we talk? Lately, I have been feeling ... (e.g., low, sad, anxious)
- ◆ I haven't been feeling ok the past couple of weeks...

Three things I can do that instantly boost my mood are:

Three people I trust to ask for help are:

If I am worried about someone, I can:





What do students say about OMM?





What do teachers say about OMM?



What do teachers say about OMM?

"The whole program is very well developed and prepared. Thank you also for the support. It makes sense to me that children should learn about the topics discussed in a completely normal way, like in geography for example. I have observed a certain development in behaviour in the class from selfish focus to empathy and genuine concern for others and it has always corresponded with the topic being discussed."

"The whole program was beneficial. The area of mental health is an important component to our health. I am glad that we were able to participate in the OMM program as part of the Health Education course. It has been beneficial for the pupils and most of them know who to contact, what to do etc. The scripts and journal were clearly laid out."

"The OMM program has met my initial expectations. It not only brings in important topics, but also activities (methods and forms of work) that are great to brighten up/supplement the often rigid (frontal) school curriculum."

What do teachers say about OMM?

"I appreciate the students' involvement in the project. You can see the shift in their perception of mental health.,,

"I enjoyed it very much, I think it is very important to talk to pupils about mental health. Especially because during the lessons I have verified that children do not have space for this topic at home. Most parents don't know anything about mental health, it's a waste of time for them."

"I really liked the coherence of OMM. Mental health is not a coherent topic in schools and is not really taught, it depends on how the educator approaches it. The regular rituals became an important part of the OMM teaching, the students responded positively to them."

"Students engaged very nicely right from the start. It was clear that they are now at the age when they are thinking more about their lives and realising a deeper sense of the consequences of our behaviour."

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Are you interested in On My Mind?
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