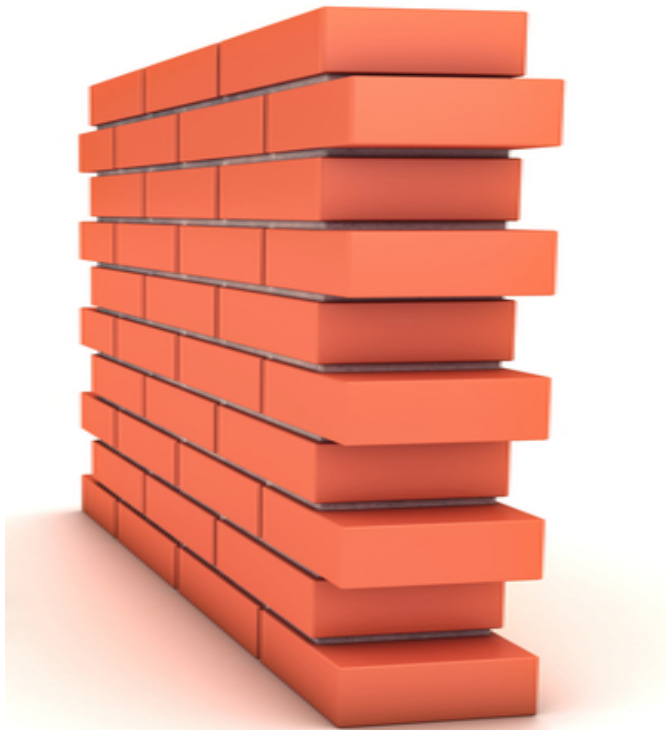


MENTAL HEALTH LITERACY (AND WHY TEACHERS SHOULD HAVE IT)

Lina Darwich

September 29, 2015



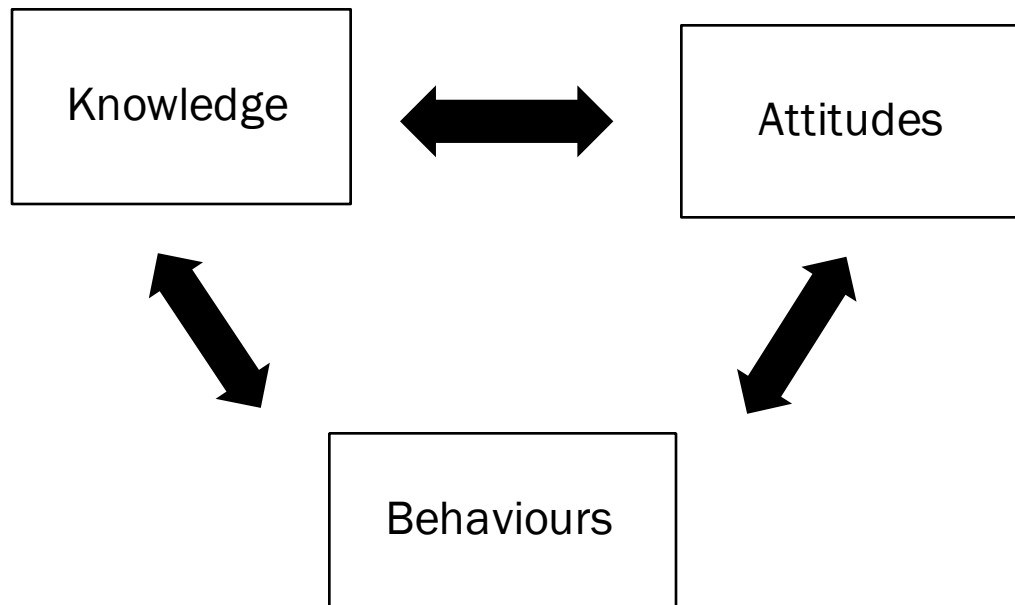
Barriers to Seeking Help

(Guillver et al., 2010)

- Stigma and embarrassment
- Confidentiality and trust
- Preference for self-reliance
- Problem recognizing symptoms
- Hopelessness

Mental Health Literacy (Jorm et al., 1997)

- Knowledge and beliefs about mental disorders which help in recognizing, managing, and preventing them. MHL includes:
 - *Recognizing specific disorders*
 - *Knowing how to seek mental health information*
 - *Understanding of risks and causes*
 - *Fostering attitudes that foster appropriate help-seeking*



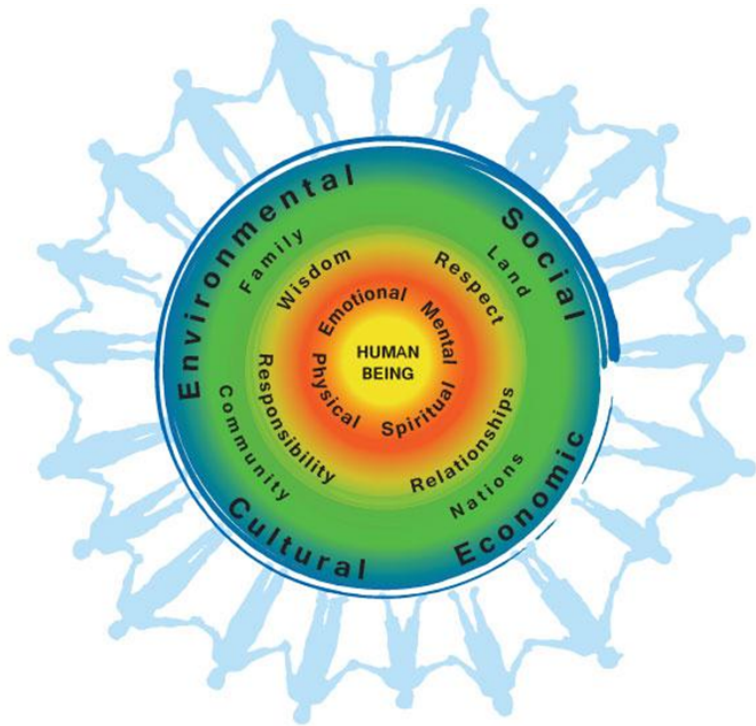
++ Understanding of mental health and mental illness/disorder

-- Stigma and embarrassment

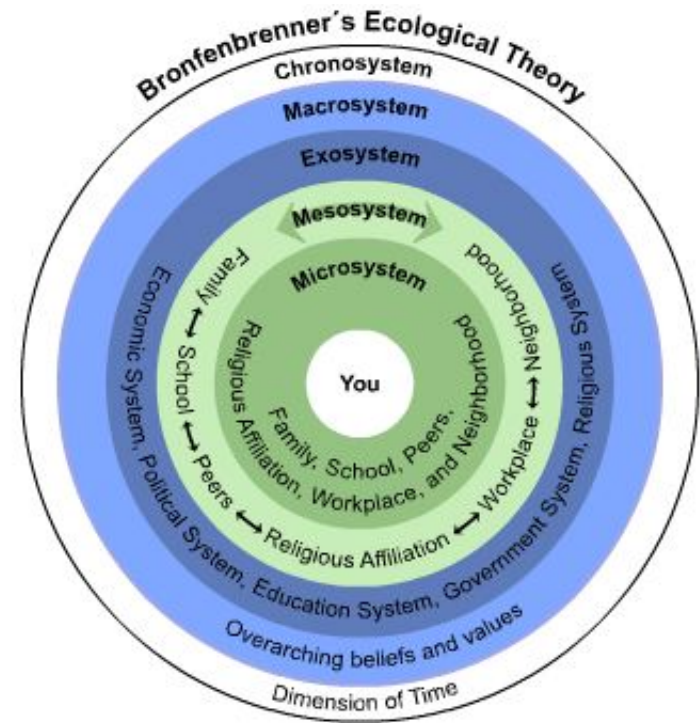
++ Youth seeking help behaviour

++ Positively managing mental disorder
(developmental and contextual)

First Nations Perspective on Wellness



Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Perspective



What Is Mental Health

(http://www.who.int/features/factfiles/mental_health/en/, 2014)

- “Mental health is defined as a state of well-being in which every individual realizes her or his own potential, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to her or his community.”

We all have mental health

Mental Health from a Child's or Teen's Perspective

http://www.cheo.on.ca/uploads/13389_Mental_Health_and_Illness_Overview.pdf

I have things to look forward to

I feel that people care about me/I am important to others

I feel hopeful about the future

I'm happy with my life

I like who I am

I feel that I have say in how my life is going

What Is Mental Disorder/Illness?

(<http://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/mental-illness/basics/definition/con-20033813> ; www.cmha.ca; <http://teenmentalhealth.org/learn/mental-disorders/>; www.cymhin.ca)

- “Mental illness refers to a wide range of mental health conditions — disorders that affect your mood, thinking and behavior. Many people have mental health concerns from time to time. But a mental health concern becomes a mental illness when ongoing signs and symptoms cause frequent stress and affect your ability to function.”
 - *Frequency: how often does the student exhibit the behaviours of concern?*
 - *Duration: how long do they last?*
 - *Intensity: to what extent do the behaviours interfere with the child’s activities?*

- 20% (1 in 5) of children and adolescents have mental disorder but only 1 in 6 get the help they need.

Mental Disorder/Illness

(<http://teenmentalhealth.org/learn/mental-disorders/>)

- A disorder of brain function; disruption of emotions, thoughts, and/or behaviour
- Stemming from complex interactions between a person's genes and their environment.
- Mental illnesses occur at similar rates around the world, in every culture and in all socio economic groups.



Mental Disorder/Illness

(<http://teenmentalhealth.org/learn/mental-disorders/>)

- High severity, prolonged
- Rarely caused only by stress
- It can happen spontaneously
- Needs diagnosis/Frequently requires the intervention of a professional

Mental Disorder Is **NOT**

(<http://www.teachers.ab.ca/SiteCollectionDocuments/ATA/Publications/Human-Rights-Issues/Compassionate%20classrooms%20booklet%20COOR-79e.pdf>)

- A sign of weak character or lack of intelligence
- A choice; overcome by willpower
- The result of bad parenting
- Malevolent spiritual intent
- Caused by poverty



Mental Distress

(CMHA, 2009)

- Is not the same as mental disorder
- Caused by a problem/event
- Not long lasting

How Can We Reduce Stigma

(http://www.edu.uwo.ca/source4allcourses/5449_MentalHealth_Rodger/documents/Stigma%20handouts.pdf)

- Learn about mental illness from reliable source
- Learn from people who experienced mental illness
- Be aware of language (not paint all people with mental illness with the same brush)
- Correct people's misconceptions
- Talk openly about mental illness
- Public education programs

What Will You Be Looking for?

(CMHA, 2009)

**Symptoms: Disruptions
the person experiences**

(e.g., loss of appetite,
loss of sleep, oversleeping)



What are the criteria?
What you need to watch for?
What you can do?
What you can ask?

**Signs: Disruptions
another person
notices**

(e.g., change in interest in
previously enjoyed activities;
weight loss)



Who Is in the Child's/Youth's Life?

(CMHA, 2009)

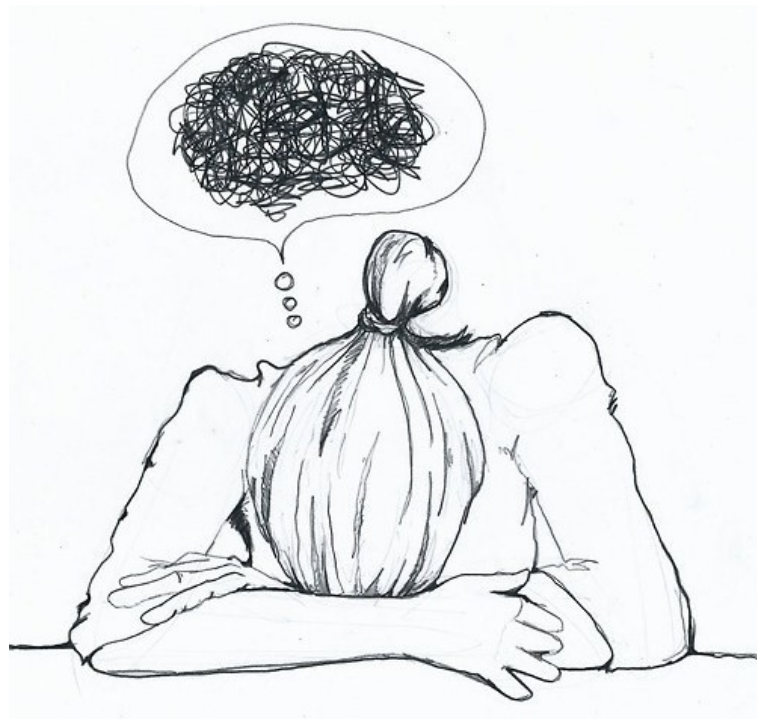
- What is their living situation? Do they have good relationships with their parents?
- Who do they live with?
- Do they have friends at school?
- Do they have adults they can count on at school?
- Are they on sports teams? Who is their coach?

What Are Some Mental Disorders?

- Anxiety Disorders
- Mood Disorders
- Attention Deficit Disorder
- Eating Disorders
- Schizophrenia
- Substance abuse

Anxiety Disorder

(CMHA, 2009, p. 30)



- Excessive/persistent anxiety over a prolonged period of time over several things
- Onset childhood and adolescence
- Genetic component
- Depression and panic disorders are also risk factors

Could Look Like

(CMHA, 2009, p. 31)

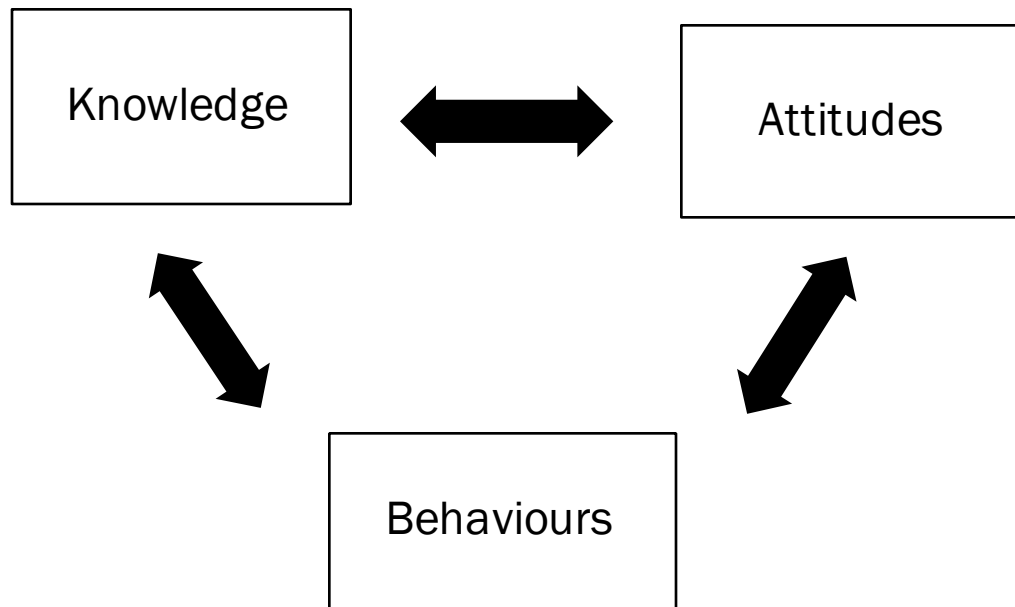
- Worry is out of proportion; greater than usual level
- Inability to work/go to school/engage in usual activities
- **Emotions:** Feeling fearful, tense
- **Body Responses:** increased heart rate, shaky, sweaty, tension in muscles; e.g., stomach
- **Thoughts:** preoccupation with thinking about real or potential sources of danger/difficulty focus on other things
- **Behaviour:** avoidance of feared situations or people or self-medicating

Questions You Can Ask

(CMHA, 2009, p. 31)

- Can you tell me about your worries?
- Do you have trouble letting go of the worries?
- What things you usually enjoy doing and are avoiding because of your worries?
- What is anything do you find makes your worrying better- does it help for a short time or long time?

Seek the appropriate professional help for them!

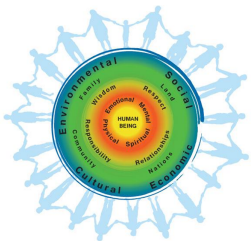


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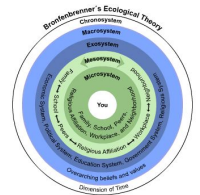
-- Stigma and embarrassment

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++ Positively managing mental disorder



CMHA, 2009



Thank you!

Websites and Resources

- http://www2.nami.org/Content/NavigationMenu/Inform_Yourself/About_Mental_Illness/About_Mental_Illness.htm
- http://www.who.int/topics/mental_disorders/en/
- <https://www.cmha.ca/mental-health/your-mental-health/>
- <http://teenmentalhealth.org/>
- <http://www.excellenceforchildandyouth.ca/>
- <http://mindyourmind.ca/>
- <http://www.kidsmentalhealth.org/>