

Child and Youth Mental Health Promotion: The Role of Public Health



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Learning Objectives

- To present a summary of results from the three phases of our research.
- To develop an understanding of the key areas for mental health promotion in children and youth.
- To gain an understanding of the potential role of public health in child and youth mental health.

Disclaimer

The LDCP Mental Health Team would like to thank Public Health Ontario (PHO) for its support of this project. The team gratefully acknowledges funding received from PHO through the Locally Driven Collaborative Projects Program.

The views expressed in this presentation are the views of the project team and do not necessarily reflect those of Public Health Ontario.

Mental Health Promotion

“Mental health promotion builds individual and community capacity by enhancing people’s own innate ability to achieve and maintain good mental health, and by creating supportive environments that reduce barriers to good mental health.”

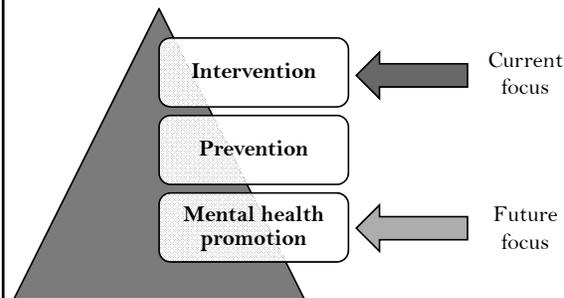


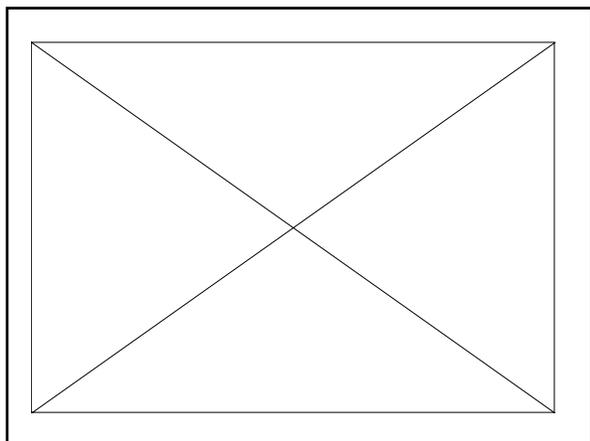
Mental Health Promotion

- Focuses on the positive aspects of health, rather than on deficits and needs
- Applies health promotion strategies of the Ottawa Charter
- Relies on collaboration of all sectors of society



The Context





Public Health and Mental Health

- One of Ontario public health’s guiding principles is: **Partnership and Collaboration**
- “Optimizing Healthy Human Development”, specifically: Early childhood development, including mental wellness and resiliency” is the **#1 priority** of Ontario public health’s strategic plan



Research Question

What are the evidence-informed areas of focus for child and youth mental health promotion initiatives that are consistent with the core principles of Ontario’s public health system?



- Three phases of research:**
- 1) Comprehensive literature review
 - 2) One-to-one stakeholder interviews
 - 3) Focus groups with public health leaders

Summary of Findings: Comprehensive Literature Review

- Areas of Focus:**
- Social connectedness
 - Resilience
 - Mental health literacy
 - Physical health
 - Parenting
 - Stigma reduction



Summary of Findings: One-to-One Stakeholder Interviews

- Areas of Focus:**
- Upstream approach
 - System integration
 - Definition of mental health promotion
 - Mental health promotion across the life-span



Summary of Findings: Focus Groups with Public Health Leaders

- Areas of Focus:**
- Understanding mental health promotion
 - Role of public health
 - Social determinants of health
 - Life-course approach to mental health promotion





Future Directions

Identifying a role of public health units in mental health promotion in children and youth may:

- 1) Improve collaboration and partnership between public health and mental health sectors
- 2) Provide rationale to advocate for inclusion of mental health within public health
- 3) **Legitimize and support work that is already occurring in public health units**

Current Mental Health Promotion Programs in Ontario Public Health Units

Parenting Programs (e.g., Triple P)	Photovoice Project
Can You Feel It? Workshop	Mental Health & Addictions Champion Project

Positive Parenting Program (Triple P)

- Aims to build positive behaviours in children, confidence in parents' abilities, and community support for raising children
- Tailored programs: tip sheets, group courses, seminars, or individual sessions



Photovoice Project

- Grades 5-12
- Theme 2014: Inclusivity, anti-bullying, friendship
- Theme 2015: Resiliency and Positive Coping Strategies



Can You Feel It? Workshop

- SDHU 2-day stress workshop
- Recognize physical, emotional, mental and social effects of stress and learn healthy coping mechanisms
- Curriculum-linked and highly interactive – videos, group and individual activities



Mental Health and Addictions Champion Project

- An initiative between the Registered Nurses Association of Ontario (RNAO) and six Ontario public health units
- Supports students to become mental health leaders and champions in their schools



Recommendations

- 1) Develop a shared understanding of mental health and mental health promotion across various sectors
- 2) A clear and consistent mandate is needed for mental health promotion within the sector



Recommendations

- 3) Develop a shared understanding of the link between physical health and mental health
- 4) Mental health promotion should occur across the lifespan
- 3) Intersectoral collaboration is required to advance the mental health promotion agenda



Recommendations

- 6) Mental health promotion for children and youth must include a focus on the underlying social determinants of health
- 7) Mental health promotion for children and youth should focus on social connectedness, parenting, resiliency, stigma reduction, physical health, and mental health literacy

Acknowledgements

- Thank you to all supporting organizations:**
- Canadian Mental Health Association, Ontario
 - Centre for Addiction and Mental Health, HPRC
 - Chatham-Kent Public Health
 - Haliburton, Kawartha, Pine Ridge District Health Unit
 - Hastings Prince Edward Public Health
 - Leeds, Grenville & Lanark District Health Unit
 - Peterborough County-City Health Unit
 - Regional Municipality of Halton, Health Department
 - Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit
 - Timiskaming Health Unit
 - Toronto Public Health

Questions ?

