



Student Action Guide

This guide was created by the Durham Talking About Mental Illness Coalition
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Welcome to the Stomping Out Stigma Student Action Guide!

This action guide is designed by the Talking About Mental Illness Coalition in Durham Region, to assist students with their plans to reduce stigma within the school community.

Has your school had the T.A.M.I. project in their classrooms?

A great place to start is with the T.A.M.I. project's secondary school In-Class Program.

How do you get started?

Now that you have attended the Stomping out Stigma summit you will have a greater understanding of the impact that stigma has on people living with mental illness. Hopefully, you will feel compelled to take some action within your school.

This guide will provide you with some very basic and easy to use tools to assist you with your efforts.

Step One:

Gather together interested people who can assist you with your plan to Stomp out Stigma. Start with those who attended the Summit and have them talk it up amongst their friends.

You will also need the support of a school administrator and/or teacher who

can act as your champion within the school.

Step Two:

Call your first meeting. Send out notices, put it on the announcements and let everyone know where and when it is.

How about inviting a member of the T.A.M.I. Coalition out to help you get started? Contact Whitby Mental Health Centre at 905-668-5881 ext. 6014 or heeneyb@wmhc.ca to be connected to a coalition representative.

Don't forget to take notes and let people know what it is they are expected to do. (See sample Meeting Notes)

Plan the rest of your meetings dates and times now so that people can put it in their agendas.

Step Three:

Spend some time making an action plan. Look at the activities that have been suggested, think up your own, be creative and have fun. (see blank Activity Page)

Try and get people to be in charge of activities that really interest them. This may reinforce their commitment.

Fill in your calendar of activities remembering that the best way to make change is to do a broad range of activities over a longer period of time. (see Activity Calendar)

Step Four:

Move ahead with your action plans and host some activities.

Don't forget to talk about each activity once it is over so that people can express what they liked, didn't like and what they would do differently next time.

Thank You!
Good Luck!



Getting the Word Out...

Once you have organized your working group and have filled out your activity calendar it is time to think about the promotion plan for each event. It may be a good idea to develop a communication strategy that coincides with your event calendar. Be sure to work with school staff to ensure that you have the support of your school principal.

You can develop press releases, news articles, public service announcements, and interviews that can expand the reach of each activity's message. The media can photograph events and further extend their message.

Think about all of the communication avenues available to you in your community and school

- School web site
- School newsletter
- School announcements
- School bulletin boards
- School radio station
- School Board media department

- Local community newspapers
- Local business association newsletters, websites
- Local mental health or youth serving agency newsletters, websites
- Local television stations
- Local radio stations
- Municipal Recreation Department websites
- Local libraries

Good media coverage gives your activity's message some staying power!



Event Planning Calendar

SEPTEMBER	
OCTOBER	
NOVEMBER	
DECEMBER	
JANUARY	
FEBRUARY	
MARCH	
APRIL	
MAY	
JUNE	



Activity

Idea: _____

Activity:

Purpose:

Target:

Supplies:

**Resources /
Costs:**

Marketing:

Checklist of Steps

- Schedule a meeting with the working group to discuss details and assign responsibilities.
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Activity Ideas



Activity Brain Fair

- Activity:** Host a mental health wellness fair at your school.
- Purpose:** To highlight the different community agencies that support youth in the community. Focus on agencies that address mental health, substance use, sexual health, employment, stress, general health etc.
- Target:** The entire school community.
After school, evening, lunch hour, or during the day so that classes may tour the facility.
- Supplies / Resources / Costs:** List of agencies to contact. See Youth Services Guide.
Letters / invitations to participate. (email and regular mail)
Use of the gymnasium or large space at the school for one day.
Stamps or access to email for invitations.
- Marketing:** Create posters and post in the school.
Send notices to teachers to arrange class tours of the fair.

Checklist of Steps

- Recruit a staff member to help you get organized and then schedule a meeting with the working group to discuss details and assign responsibilities
- Pick a date for your Brain Fair and get approval from school administration for the day
- Once approved, begin your marketing strategy. Design posters for the event, put out a notice in the school newsletter, get support of your student council, design a series of announcements for the event.
- Develop a master list of agencies and send them invitations to participate and then track those that have confirmed their attendance
- Put out enough tables and chairs for each agency
- Remember: this activity is geared to help to reduce the cycle of stigma in your school community.

Resources

- Youth Services Guide
- Web search: *youth mental health* and *Durham*



Activity Creative Minds

- Activity:** Host a creative arts show.
- Purpose:** To highlight the power of the creative mind. To highlight creative expression as a positive coping mechanism for stress.
- Target:** The entire “creative” school community!
- Supplies / Resources / Costs:** Speak with the Art, English and Drama departments. Ask if they will participate in some way with the or with organizing the event.
- Marketing:** Announcements
Posters in the hallways
Support and promotion from the Art Department

Checklist of Steps

- ❑ Schedule a meeting with the working group to discuss details and assign responsibilities.
- ❑ Pick a title/ theme for the contest and set the parameters as to what kinds of creative art projects you are looking for and what types of mediums you will allow. (will Drama and Music be included?) A registration form should be created.
- ❑ Speak with the Art Department: Would any teachers donate some class time to students interested in participating or open up the art room during lunch or after school? For art classes with independent assignments, could an entry in this be counted as an assignment?
- ❑ Select a date for submissions. Select a date range for displaying the works.
- ❑ Work with your school administration to have a designated area of the school approved to display the works of art.
- ❑ Plan a specific day to host an actual art “show” (during the display days) and invite the media in to cover the event. Ensure the message highlights creative expression as a positive coping mechanism for stress.

Resources

- ❑ Your school Art Department



Activity Quotable Quotes

Activity: Line school hallways with famous quotes on banner paper. Have the quotes focus on making change, the power of individuals, kindness, compassion, social change.

How about reading a new quote each morning on the announcements, then have it posted in the hallway before lunchtime. Doing the activity like this, a new quote could be added each day for month. Have a box that students can deposit quotes into and if they are suitable...paint and post them on a banner.

Purpose: To highlight the fact that the power to eliminate all stigma lies in the hands of the individual.

Target: The entire school community.

Supplies / Resources / Costs: Quotes available on the internet and in the libraries. Banner paper, paints, markers. Why not speak to the art department about what they can donate.

Marketing: Announcements
Posters

Checklist of Steps

- Recruit a school staff member to help you get organized and then schedule a meeting with the working group to discuss details and assign responsibilities
- Create a schedule of quote painting and readings.
- Decide on the length of time the activity will run.
- Decide on where the quotes will be posted. If you are worried about graffiti, try to place the banner at ceiling height.

Resources

- Check out the internet and library for famous quotes.



Quotable Quotes

"The ideas that have lighted my way have been kindness, beauty and truth."
Albert Einstein

"How wonderful it is that nobody need wait a single minute before starting to improve the world."
Anne Frank

"Do your little bit of good where you are; it's those little bits of good put together that overwhelm the world."
Archbishop Desmond Tutu

"In Compassion lies the world's true strength."
Buddha

"This is my simple religion. There is no need for temples; no need for complicated philosophy. Our own brain, our own heart is our temple; the philosophy is kindness."
The Dalai Lama

"Kind words can be short and easy to speak but their echoes are truly endless."
Mother Teresa

"When you are kind to someone in trouble, you hope they'll remember and be kind to someone else. And it'll become like wildfire."
Whoopi Goldberg

"How far that little candle throws his beams! So shines a good deed in a weary world."
William Shakespeare

The world is a dangerous place, not because of those who do evil, but because of those who look on and do nothing.

Albert Einstein

Never doubt that a small, group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has.

Margaret Mead



Activity

Babble about the Biblio

- Activity:** Establish lists of recent books and/or articles that talk about or portray mental illness and have discussion groups about the materials.
- Purpose:** To encourage dialogue on how mental illness is presented in these works and how they apply to their own lives or people they know.
- Target:** Students and teachers who enjoy reading.
- Supplies / Resources / Costs:** List of books from the library
Meeting room space.
The school library is an excellent resource as well as the school board library.
- Marketing:** Give materials to English teachers.
Posters in the Library.

Checklist of Steps

- Schedule a meeting with the working group to discuss details and assign responsibilities including the following steps
- Obtain staff/administration support for your efforts– seek a “staff sponsor” if possible
- Develop a list of books – ask the school librarian and English teachers for material that may also fit into current curriculum
- Make posters to encourage people to attend – promote the chosen selection (you could host a book club meeting, or choose a popular current book and invite people already familiar with it to share their thoughts and experiences
- Arrange meetings outside of school time or request time within appropriate classes to explore the topic
- Enlist staff support in allowing announcements to be made about the event both prior to it occurring and as a review afterwards. If your school has a school paper, consider how you can include articles and/or book reviews related to mental health and stigma.

Resources

- School library, local library and school library staff and resources



Activity Poster Contest

- Activity:** Host a poster design contest within your school. The poster should highlight the negative impact of stigma and/or what you can do to reduce stigma.
- Purpose:** To offer a chance for students to express their creativity and to create posters to be displayed within the school further delivering the anti-stigma message.
- Target:** Creative students in the school.
- Supplies / Resources / Costs:** Posters
Prizes, maybe local businesses would donate some.
Judges within the school community and perhaps from the T.A.M.I. coalition.
Judging forms, contest entry forms
- Marketing:** Posters
Announcements
Presentations in the Art classes.

Checklist of Steps

- Schedule a meeting with the working group to discuss details and assign responsibilities
- Develop a list of criteria for the contest (sample available in Resources section)
- Solicit local businesses for prizes
- Develop a system for tracking and numbering the posters submitted
- Enlist the support of the Art Department of your school – inquire about the ability for the contest to fit into current curriculum
- Reserve a location for the poster contest display (request and confirm with school administration)
- Develop a score sheet for judges
- Choose potential judges, request their participation and confirm their availability for the date of the poster contest
- Invite students, staff and community members to view the posters, determine if your committee would like to make this a large school wide event and consider inviting local media
- Recognize prize donors with thank you letters and mention at the event

Resources

Sample Poster Criteria

Posters must incorporate **creative and original** artwork and ideas

Posters must deliver a **clear and positive** message about mental illness and the **negative impact** of stigma

Posters must be no larger than standard poster board size (22 inches by 28 inches) and no smaller than 9 inches by 12 inches.

Posters should not be laminated or mounted on mat board.

Ask students to refrain from writing their name or other identifying information on the front of their poster. Poster contest entry numbers should not be marked on the fronts of posters either.

Students may use a variety of media, such as watercolor, pen and ink, crayon, chalk, markers, etc.

Computer clip art, pictures from magazines and other print media, or any other copyrighted brand or product images **will not** be accepted.

Failure to comply with the guidelines could result in a disqualification of the poster.



Activity Room for Relaxation

Activity: Host a weekly/monthly relaxation room where staff and students can learn relaxation techniques.

Purpose: To assist students and teachers with learning new techniques for stress management and relaxation.
Sessions could include Yoga, Pilates, guided imagery, progressive muscle relaxation, music etc.

Target: The entire school community

**Supplies /
Resources /
Costs:** Instructors for each session
Seek community volunteers
A room for each session
Some water for participants

Marketing: Announcements
Posters
A great event for the weeks leading up to exam time

Checklist of Steps

- Schedule a meeting with the working group to discuss details and assign responsibilities
- Create a schedule for the relaxation room.
- Contact and invite the required guest speakers to facilitate sessions.
- Create a promotion plan and implement it.

Reources

- Start with your school staff, someone may be a yoga instructor etc.
- Local community agencies such as health and employment may have workshops on stress management



Activity Wall of Fame

- Activity:** Decorate a school hallway with photos and bios of celebrities who have experienced a mental illness. Ensure that posters are up that show where youth can go if they need help. You can include music to be played in the hallways of famous musicians who have lived with mental illness.
- Purpose:** To show that mental illness can affect anyone.
- Target:** The entire school community.
- Supplies / Resources / Costs:** Check the internet for bios and pictures of celebrities who have been affected by mental illness.
Printing of pictures from the internet, poster paper.
Check to with your school to see if any subject or class covers mental health in their curriculum as they may want to assist with this project or bring work they have already done into the hallways.
Cd's of music for the hallways
- Marketing:** Announcements could highlight the wall of fame.
An excellent event for Oscar season, treat it as the red carpet.
Highlight one celebrity each day for a specific period of time.

Checklist of Steps

- Schedule a meeting with the working group to discuss details and assign responsibilities
- Possibly include this theme with your brain fair day—i.e. have the wall of fame outside and inside the room where the brain fair is taking place
- Divide your working group so that members can look at the famous people with mental illness in the following areas: television and film, music, literature, politics, etc...
- Research each individual and include on the wall of fame: name, title, name of illness, symptoms of the illness, how the person overcame the illness, Remember, we are looking at reversing the cycle of stigma associated with mental illness.

Resources

- The internet, school library, local library, community mental health agencies



Activity Movie Moments

- Activity:** How about having a series or single movie showing. It could be movies talking about mental illness, highlighting characters with mental illness or television programs dealing with the issue. A great time to get together after school, at lunch or whenever the time permits. There are lots of TV shows that have dealt with mental illness, suicide etc. Pre screen the movies and make sure that they deal with mental illness in a positive and realistic way. Popcorn could be added as a cheap snack!
- Purpose:** To find an informal way to introduce the issues surrounding mental illness. Great discussions can occur about the way mental illness has been portrayed in the movie.
- Target:** General school population.
- Supplies / Resources / Costs:** Movie or television show , dvd or video
TV, VCR or DVD player
Room for viewing, seats
Popcorn makes a cheap snack
- Marketing:** Create movie posters to distribute through the school. Announcements.

Checklist of Steps

- Schedule a meeting with the working group to discuss details and assign responsibilities.
- Select the movies or television shows for viewing as well as the location.
- Create a schedule and advertise within the school through posters and announcements.
- Invite local mental health support agencies to come to the viewing and assist with the post movie discussions.

Resources

- National Film Board, school board library, video store



Activity Teacher Info Kits

Activity: Assemble and distribute information kits for teachers.

Purpose: These information kits will inform teachers about the issues surrounding youth and mental health. Teachers may then be able to assist students to identify warning signs/symptoms, direct them to get help and better understand the role they play in creating a supportive environment.

Ensure the kit has information about the TAMI project information in it as teachers may want to include the program in their course work or arrange a session for the staff.

Target: Teachers, guidance counselors, administrative staff in high schools.

Supplies / Resources / Costs: Resource materials gathered from various community agencies about the services that they provide. Info sheets about youth and mental illness. (signs/symptoms of depression, stress etc.)

There may be a nominal charge for some resource materials. Check to see if you have permission to photocopy resources. Seek school support with photocopy needs. Check out the internet for free resource sheets.

Marketing: Packages could be distributed directly at staff meetings or in teacher mail boxes.

Checklist of Steps

- Schedule a meeting with the working group to discuss details and assign responsibilities
- Seek the support of your school administration for this project.
- Determine the number of teachers who will receive info packages.
- Contact local youth serving agencies and ask them for information pamphlets.
- Create cover letter outlining why you are sending the package and created useful info sheets from information gathered.
- Assemble and distribute packages as per the plan.

Resources

- Local mental health agencies including the Canadian Mental Health Association.



Activity Lunch N Learn

- Activity:** Provide a series of lunch hour workshops hosted by youth serving agencies on topics relevant to youth and mental health.
- Purpose:** To promote discussions, learning and to give agencies the opportunity to make connections with youth in schools.
- Target:** Interested students in high school
- Supplies/
Resources /
Costs:** Posters, flyers, any audio visual equipment that presenters may need.
Meeting room.
- Marketing:** Posters throughout the schools.
Homeroom flyers.
Announcements.

Checklist of Steps

- Schedule a meeting with the working group to discuss details and assign responsibilities
- Seek the support of school administration with this project.
- Determine what topics of interest you would like to have workshops on. Think about what would support the needs of the student body.
- Select a series of tentative times and dates for the workshops.
- Invite local agencies to present on the selected topics during the selected times.
- Post invitations and posters throughout the school.
- Ensure that the organizations are thanked for their participation.

Resources

- Local youth serving agencies



Talking About Mental Illness T.A.M.I. Durham

Purpose:

To bring together community agencies, schools, youth, people with mental illness and other community members to develop and deliver awareness programs for secondary school students in Durham Region. This program was originally created by the Mood Disorder Association of Ontario, the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health and the Canadian Mental Health Association.

In Durham Region a local T.A.M.I. coalition was formed and has been working on addressing the issues associated with stigma and mental illness for over four years.

Membership:

Whitby Mental Health Centre
The Youth Centre
The Canadian Mental Health Association - Durham Branch
Pinewood Centre of Lakeridge Health
Mood Disorder Association of Durham
Durham District School Board
Durham Catholic District School Board
Durham Mental Health Services
Durham Family Court Clinic
Community Members

Goals:

To eliminate or reduce the stigma associated with mental illness.

To provide secondary school teachers with the appropriate support and materials to implement an in-class awareness program.

To provide secondary school students and teachers with the appropriate support and materials to develop school wide, student driven awareness programs.

To provide an opportunity for secondary school students to learn from people who have experienced mental-illness first hand.

To help students to understand where and how they can access help for themselves and their peers.

Secondary School In-class Program:

Teachers are provided with a teachers manual and student workbooks to guide them through the program.

An introductory session (one class period) is facilitated by a TAMI coalition member where a pre-test is delivered and the stage is set for the weeks work.

During the week teachers guide students through the workbook in preparation for the end of week presentation.

At the end of week presentation, a TAMI coalition member will facilitate a session (one class period) of moving presentations by people living with mental illness. There is an opportunity for students to ask questions. School Administrators, guidance counselors and school social workers should be invited to the final session. Students are given a list of resources available to them in their community.

This program can formally fit into the Ontario Secondary School Curriculum Guidelines for many subjects. Healthy Active Living Education (Grade 11), Health for Life (Grade 11), Intro to Anthropology, Psychology and

Sociology (Grade 11), Media Studies (Grade 11), Leadership and Peer Support (Grade 11), Philosophy (Grade 11), Individuals and Families in Diverse Society (Grade 12), Healthy and Active Living Education (Grade 12), Parenting and Human Development (Grade 12).

This program can also fit into the school curriculum where there are “teachable moments”. Examples include: English classes studying a novel where a character may have a mental illness, Art classes where there may be a study of an artist with a mental illness etc...

T.A.M.I. Summit

Teachers and up to four students per school are invited to attend the annual T.A.M.I. Summit.

Attendees participate in activities and exercises that talk about the stigma associated with mental illness.

Attendees will have an opportunity to meet and hear the moving stories of people living with mental illness.

Each school will be given a manual and resources to assist them with planning awareness activities within their home schools that will work on reducing the stigma associated with mental illness.

Each school will be assigned a member of the T.A.M.I. coalition as their direct support person to assist with the development of their awareness plans.

T.A.M.I. Speaker Training

The T.A.M.I. coalition is privileged to have members of the community who are living with mental illness share their experiences with others.

Speaker screening, training, support and recognition is provided by the

T.A.M.I. coalition to the dedicated individuals who are part of the program.

**For more information contact:
Whitby Mental Health Centre
905-668-5881
ext. 6014**

“Be the change you want to see.” -
Gandhi