



LESSON PLANS

Seeking Help

Duration: 1 hour–90 minutes

Overview

Section I – Seeking Help

In this lesson, students will learn that everyone needs help (i.e. seeking help is universal) and *where and how to seek help*. Within small groups, students will discuss and list various social support networks (e.g. friends, family, teachers, etc.) and formal mental health resources that are available to them within their community (e.g. Kids Help Phone, community counselling, family doctors, etc.). The teacher will document the students' suggestions on an infographic (which will remain in the classroom for future reference). Students will then discuss when and how a young person may access such supports.

Section II – Kids Help Phone Counsellor Interview

Afterwards, the students will have the opportunity to speak directly with a Kids Help Phone counsellor. Prior to this conversation the students will formulate questions they would like to ask the counsellor; the students will play the role of 'interviewers' when they talk with the counsellor.

For the purposes of this pilot, please contact Natalie Montgomery to arrange the interview with the Kids Help Phone counsellor.

Contact Information

Natalie Montgomery
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Please note: this contact information will only be available to schools participating in the Bell *Let's Talk* pilot program.

Learning Outcomes

Students will:

- Understand that *everyone* (including youth and adults) needs help from various people throughout their lives
- Identify people/organizations that are available to help youth within their surrounding community including formal services and personal social networks
- Identify when and how an individual may seek help
- Understand the services offered by Kids Help Phone

Preparation and Materials

To prepare for this lesson, please ensure you:

- Read the *Let's Talk: Finding Reliable Mental Health Information and Resources Teacher Training Guide* [http://mediasmarts.ca/sites/default/files/pdfs/Lets_Talk_Teacher_Training_Guide.pdf]
- Review the *Let's Talk: Finding Reliable Mental Health Information and Resources Teacher Training Presentation* [<http://mediasmarts.ca/sites/default/files/tutorials/teacher-training-presentation/index.html>]
- Review the *Let's Talk About Mental Health* student presentation [http://mediasmarts.ca/sites/default/files/Lets_Talk_Student_Presentation.zip].

To prepare for this lesson teachers will need:

- Large poster-sized Infographic
- *Supportive Relationships in My Community* infographic worksheet
- *Seeking Help Scenarios*
- Scrap paper

Procedure

Section I – Social Support Networks

Introduction

Prior to starting the lesson present the *Let's Talk About Mental Health* student presentation to your class.

Organize the students into small groups (3–4 students per group). Each group selects a writer, a speaker and a timer.

Outline the learning objectives of the lesson. Specifically, inform the class that during the lesson the students will think of different people/places that someone may go to when they are in need of help and support for a mental/emotional health concern. Inform the students that they will never be asked to share personal information about their own mental/emotional health concerns. Rather, the students will focus on the people and places available to an average Grade 7 or 8 student living within their city/town.

After discussing the learning objectives, facilitate a class discussion about the universality of seeking help (*i.e. everyone needs help sometimes*). Ask the class: *Who needs help? Does everybody need help? When do people need help (what do youth need help with)? When do people need help with their health? When do people need help with their emotions?*

The students should recognize that everyone needs help sometimes. They should recognize that people get help for many different reasons, including: physical health (doctors), education (teachers) and finances (parents/guardians). It should be highlighted that everyone also needs help and support with mental and emotional health from time to time (both from established relationships and formal or informal supports).

Seeking Help Scenarios

Select a scenario (from page 31) and read it to the class. After reading the scenario ask the students to discuss the following in their groups: *Where could the main character in the scenario go to find help?*

Within their groups, have all students think of different places the character in the scenario could go to find help. The writer from each group should write down their responses on a scrap piece of paper. The groups will have a set time limit to come up with their answers (e.g. 2–3 minutes). Although this should not be a competition, it may be fun to encourage the students to see how many answers they can come up with within the time limit.

If the students are having a difficult time thinking of answers, encourage them to think of *anyone* who can help. For example: *It could be someone they see every day; it could also be someone they have never met before (e.g., a police officer, or doctor).*

If the class is still having trouble thinking of different resources, you may want to ask facilitating questions. For example: *What if they don't want to talk to someone they know? What if they don't want to talk to someone in person?*

After 2–3 minutes, ask each group to share three of their suggestions with the class (the groups should avoid repeating suggestions of the other groups).



Document the students' responses on the large poster-sized infographic using a permanent marker. You may choose to categorize the students' suggestions. For example, you may use subheadings (e.g. 'family') and write a list underneath (e.g. 'mother, father, brother, sister', etc.).

Note: After the lesson, please display the large poster-sized infographic so it may be used by the students as a resource.

As you document the students' suggestions on the poster-sized infographic, engage the class in a discussion about the accessibility of mental health resources. For example, when a student suggests a formal mental health resource (such as a doctor or a counsellor), ask students how someone their age (within their town/community) might access such a service. For example, you may want to ask: *How can someone make an appointment to see a counsellor? Do you need your parent's permission to see a counsellor? Do all counsellors cost money? (Remind the students that they should avoid discussing their personal experiences; these are general questions about anyone their age.)* You may choose to document some of this information on the large poster-sized infographic as well.

When a group suggests an informal mental health resource (such as a parent/guardian, sibling or friend), highlight that interpersonal relationships (such as parents/guardians, aunts/uncles, grandparents, etc.) are one of the most important forms of support. You may want to ask the students: *Are parents and family an important form of support/help? Why? (Note: please keep in mind that many students may not receive substantial support from their immediate families. You may want to focus on the message: having people who care about us is important, opposed to naming specific titles, like parents.)*

If there is more time available, you may read another scenario. Try to choose a scenario which should elicit different responses from the class.

Personal Supports

Distribute the individualized *Supportive Relationships in My Community* infographic worksheets to each student. Remind them to complete the infographic at home, so that they can refer to them when in times of need. Encourage the students to think about the people available to them within their personal lives; people who they would realistically go to for help. It may include friends and family, family doctors and teachers, etc. Each infographic will have Kids Help Phone included, a resource available to all students.

Section II – Kids Help Phone Counsellor Interview

Note: Please contact Natalie Montgomery to arrange the interview.

Before the interview, ask the groups to think of questions they would like to ask the Kids Help Phone counsellor. You may want to encourage the students to think of themselves as ‘journalists’. The students should be encouraged to ask the counsellor *anything* about the services. Remind the students that this is not a personal counselling call about issues they want to seek help about but rather, a way to find out more about Kids Help Phone.

The counsellor will phone into the classroom (as arranged before the lesson). The students will have the opportunity to ask the counsellor questions. The counsellor will engage the students in a discussion and offer insight into the services offered by Kids Help Phone.

Should time permit, students may complete the following extension activities.

Extension Activities

Activity I – Kids Help Phone Infographic

After the discussion with the Kids Help Phone counsellor, the class has the option to make a ‘Kids Help Phone infographic’. On the infographic, the class may list what they learned about the services offered by Kids Help Phone (e.g. it is anonymous and confidential) and when someone may choose to use the service (e.g. it might be for any reason, there is nothing too big or small to call about).

Teacher Prompts

- What did you learn about Kids Help Phone today?
- What does anonymous and confidential mean?
- What sorts of calls does Kids Help Phone get?

Potential Student Responses

- Kids Help Phone is a free 24/7 counselling service for youth.
- Kids Help Phone does not know whose calling and can’t find out. Anyone who calls and what they talk about are always kept between the counsellor and the person contacting them, except if there may be a risk to someone’s safety in which case the person would be encouraged to get immediate help with the support of the counsellor.
- Kids Help Phone gets a lot of different types of calls. What they talk about is always up to the caller.

Activity II – Kids Help Phone Article

After the interview with Kids Help Phone, the students may write a newspaper article about Kids Help Phone. This might link well with a language/writing lesson. Perhaps a student's article can be printed in the school newspaper or bulletin.

Teacher Prompt

- What did you learn about Kids Help Phone today?
- What does anonymous and confidential mean?
- What sorts of calls does Kids Help Phone get?
- What sorts of people work at Kids Help Phone?

Potential Student Responses

- Kids Help Phone is a free 24/7 counselling service for youth.
- Kids Help Phone does not know whose calling and can't find out. Anyone who calls and what they talk about are always kept between the counsellor and the person contacting them, except if there may be a risk to someone's safety in which case the person would be encouraged to get immediate help with the support of the counsellor.
- Kids Help Phone gets a lot of different types of calls. What they talk about is always up to the caller.
- Kids Help Phone has professional counsellors who are similar to other people that you know, who like sports, music and anything in between.

Activity III – Kids Help Phone Journal

Individually, the students can write a journal entry about their experience 'interviewing' the Kids Help Phone counsellor. The students may want to write about what they think of Kids Help Phone and some new things they have learned.

Teacher Prompts

- What do you think draws young people to contact Kids Help Phone?
- What did you think of the counsellor?
- Did you learn anything new about Kids Help Phone?
- Did you enjoy the presentation?

Potential Student Responses

- Kids Help Phone is free and you can call them anytime you want.
- When you call Kids Help Phone, the call is *your* call. The counsellor is there to listen and help *you* think of ways to improve your situation.
- Kids Help Phone isn't there just for bullying, you can call if there is *anything* you would like to talk about.
- Kids Help Phone is completely anonymous and confidential; that means they don't know whose calling and can't find out.



Seeking Helping Scenarios

Select one or more scenario to read to your class. Remember to consider your student's backgrounds when choosing a scenario; it is advisable that you do not choose a scenario which may reflect a student's current struggle.

Scenarios

1. Helena is being cyberbullied. Helena has tried to create new accounts, but somehow the same people always find a way to bully her online. The people who bully her say some pretty mean things to her and they have even threatened to beat her up. Helena has tried to ignore it, but this is starting to get to her. She feels violated and she is finding it harder to trust people and is starting to keep her distance from others; she just can't understand how anyone could be so mean. Helena doesn't like the way she has been feeling and wants to change. Where might she go for help?
2. Leon is a Grade 8 student. He does pretty well with most subjects and always tries to do a decent job with his homework and projects. As Leon gets closer to high school, his parents want to see him get better grades. Leon's parents hired a tutor; they told him that if he doesn't get at least 90% on his upcoming math test they will ground him for a week. Leon is feeling like he is under a lot of pressure; he tries to talk to his parents about it, but it always turns into a fight. This has been causing him a lot of stress. He feels like he needs someone to talk to; like he needs to get everything off his chest. Who could he talk to?
3. Jake is having a tough time at school. He has a big presentation coming up, but he hates talking in front of the class. No one else in the class seems worried about the presentation, so Jake acts like he isn't worried either. But the truth is, Jake is really nervous and feels like he's the only one that feels this way. He's starting to feel like there is something wrong with him. Is there anyone he could talk to?
4. Chris and Piers were best friends, but Piers' family suddenly had to move to another town. It's been a couple of months since Piers moved and even though they promised to talk to each

other through their favorite videogame, Piers hasn't been on for two weeks. Chris is starting to feel really lonely; he's starting to ignore his other friends and doesn't feel like doing much the past couple of days. Chris is feeling alone and wants someone to talk to but he doesn't want to bother anybody. Is there anyone Chris can talk to?

5. Ada is constantly teased by her older sister, Sherri. Ada has talked to her parents about this, but Sherri just won't stop. It's starting to get so bad that Ada has lost some of her self-confidence. She has started to believe some of the mean things her sister says and is starting to feel like nobody likes her. Ada needs to talk to someone about this, but isn't sure who she can talk to. Who could she talk to?
6. Claire has been really down for the past couple of weeks. She hasn't gone out with any of her friends for the past month and has been absent from school a lot. When she is at school she barely talks to anyone. Claire's friends have tried to talk to her about her feelings; she says she's been feeling depressed and wants to change, but feels hopeless. Is there anywhere Claire could go to talk to someone?

Teacher Prompts

If the students are struggling to think of **formal** resources (such as doctors, counsellors, etc.), the following facilitative questions may help:

- What if the main character* (in the scenario) isn't comfortable talking to one of their friends or family?
- What if the main character* isn't comfortable talking to someone they know?
- What if the main character* isn't comfortable talking to someone in person?

If the students are struggling to think of **informal** social networks (such as friends, family, etc.), the following questions may help:

- What if the main character* isn't comfortable talking to a stranger?
- What if the main character* wants to talk to someone they know?

* please use the character's name from your scenario.

Name: _____

Date: _____

Supportive Relationships in My Community

Please think about all the different people, places or things in your community that can offer support and help. You can write them anywhere on the page!



Kids Help Phone is always there for you, 24/7, 365 days a year online and by phone.

If you feel stuck trying to think of healthy and supportive relationships, try thinking about what sorts of people or things that help you feel good about yourself—it could be someone that always says hello to you, a favourite pet, or an online friend.