

Making Mental Health Education Relatable, Practical and Engaging

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Overall Goals:

To provide students with an experience that is in line with the Mental Health and High School Curriculum Guide and can be integrated into the curriculum as part of the students mental health classes.

Using a variety of engaging activities (yoga, presentation of my own personal narrative, whole and small group discussion and creation of personal action plan), I will speak to the challenges, recovery methods and proactive health strategies I have used in my own mental health journey in order to:

- encourage students to reflect upon their own mental health
- reduce the stigma of talking about, and reaching out for mental health support
- navigate the barriers of access to community mental health supports
- serve as a role model as it relates how one can live a fulfilling and successful life with mental illness

To give students practical and actionable tools they can use on a daily basis to improve their self-efficacy and mental health by introducing them to mindful practices and developing a wellness plan.

Sessions:

Each of these sessions will be 70 minutes in length, which includes time for discussion. Sessions will consist of two components:

- a. Whole Group Presentation
- b. Mindful yoga class

Session One

Goals:

1. To have the students learn that you can have an amazing life regardless of mental health challenges by:
 - a. Providing personal examples of success in school, athletics, career and relationships
 - b. Providing students with a list of successful people who have successfully dealt with mental health challenges

2. To decrease stigma by:
 - a. Hearing firsthand experiences and my journey from childhood through to adult life
 - b. Giving students a chance to ask questions about my story for greater understanding
3. Asking for help is a sign of strength not weakness:
 - a. Explaining how I struggled and still do struggle to ask for help because of fear and stigma
 - b. Explain how asking for help has saved my life
4. To understand Bipolar Disorder in an in-depth manner by:
 - a. Explaining biological factors
 - b. Discussing family history
 - c. Discussing triggers and prevention strategies
5. To learn how to help a friend by:
 - a. Personal examples of how friends have helped me
 - b. Personal example of how I have helped friends
 - c. Boundaries
6. To introduce mindful activities that enhance both physical and mental health by:
 - a. A general 30 minute yoga class that teaches the fundamentals of yoga and mindfulness

Presentation (30 minutes)

My Personal Narrative

- i. My successes along with others
- ii. Journey through my childhood, teen and adult life
- iii. Experiences before being diagnosed with Bipolar II
- iv. Asking for help
- v. Experiences after diagnosis
- vi. How to help a friend

Discussion (10 minutes)

Yoga Class (40 minutes)

- a. A general 30 minute yoga class that teaches the fundamentals of yoga and mindfulness
- b. 10 minute discussion

Session Two

Goals:

1. To learn different aspects of mental wellness is by going through the different aspects of mental wellness:
 - a. Emotional, Environmental, Social, Physical, Intellectual, Occupational, Financial and Spiritual (Purpose in life (non-secular)
2. To develop a wellness plan by:
 - a. Showing mine and giving a short explanation of how I developed it
 - b. Providing time to explore what they can do to stay improve their mental health
3. To be introduced to mindful strategies that enhance both physical and mental health by:
 - a. Teaching a restorative yoga and yoga nidra class

Presentation

How to build a wellness plan (15 minutes)

1. What is mental wellness
2. My mental wellness and how it was developed

Developing a mental wellness plan through (10 minutes):

- a. Optimism App as a tool
 - i. Symptoms
 - ii. Triggers
 - iii. Stay Well Strategies

Discussion (10 minute)

Yoga Class

- a. A 30 minute restorative yoga class that includes more guided meditation to understand how to bring the body back to homeostasis
- b. 10 minute discussion

Follow-Up

Teach two more yoga classes within the same school year building on the previous classes.

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Cost of the program:

\$425 for four classes

\$115 for follow-up yoga classes

Testimonials:

“Jeff is a very passionate, engaging speaker. His unique ability to connect and engage students on a difficult yet very important topic of mental health was impressive. We planned to have him back every year at our school for years to come. Thank you very much Jeff, your courage and openness was appreciated.”

Joel Gibson
Physical Education and Careers Teacher
Sentinel High School
West Vancouver Schools

“Jeff has a strong presence with students – he has their attention from start to finish. Jeff has the ability to share his story while simultaneously providing steps for self-care. Students were able to empathize with his journey and therefore self-reflect on their own experiences.”

Derek Wong
Associate Director of University Guidance
Collingwood School
West Vancouver

“Jeff has shown an on-going commitment to supporting the physical and mental health of his students by designing and teaching therapeutically-based yoga classes with a focus on a holistic approach to wellness. He is a clear, compassionate teacher and communicator who brings humour and warmth to all of his classes. I would recommend Jeff to anyone who wants to study with a teacher with deep knowledge and integrity. He is gem!”

Nicole Marcia,
Yoga Therapist
Fine Balance Yoga

“Jeff’s yoga teaching is exemplary. He has a very specific knowledge of how to apply yoga for mental health issues and he has created a niche in the community designing and teaching yoga programs focusing on mental health.”

Jules Payne
Co-Owner & Director of Teacher Training Ajna Yoga
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