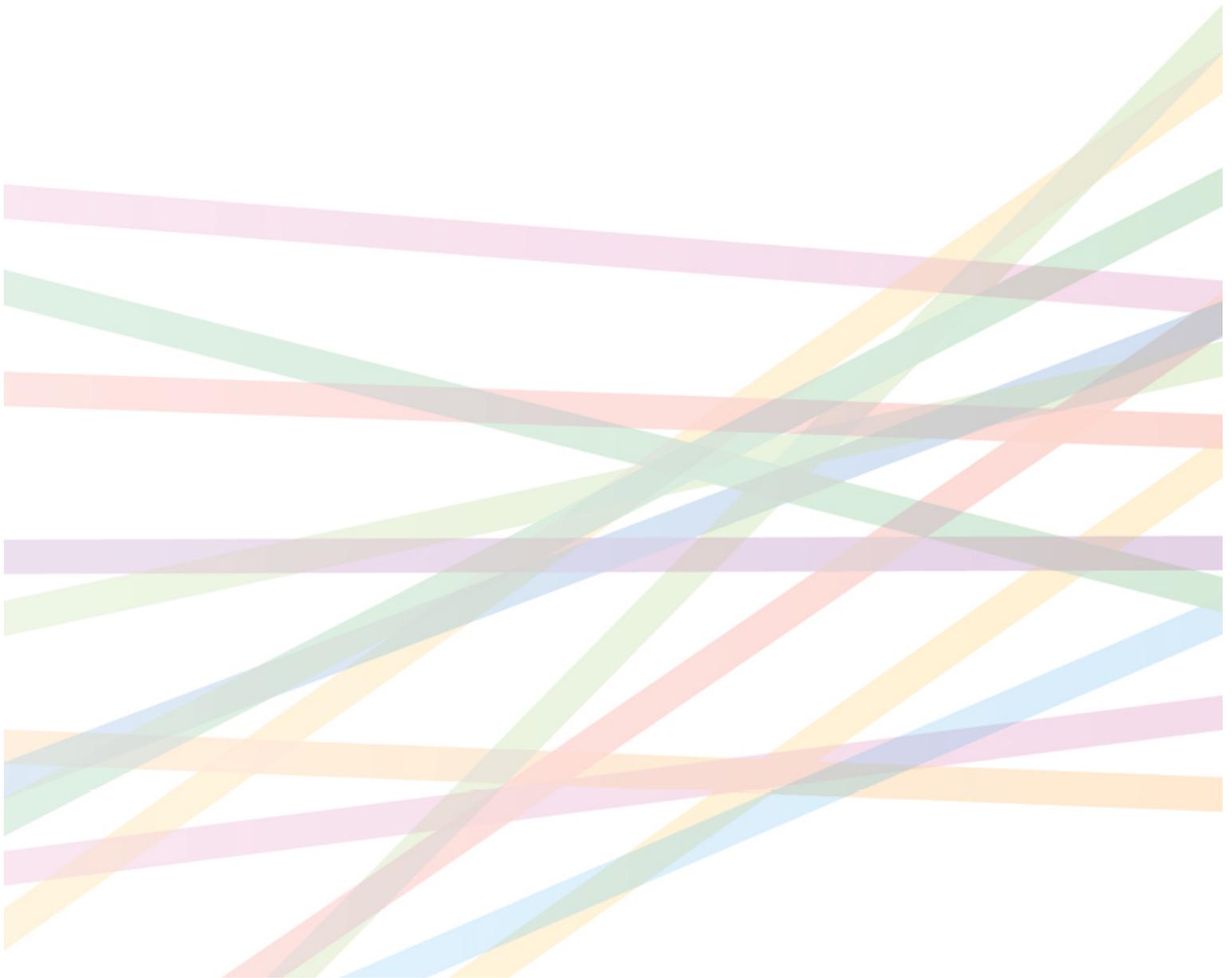




MENTAL HEALTH & HIGH SCHOOL
CURRICULUM GUIDE TRAINING

REPORT FOR THE CALGARY AREA



MENTAL HEALTH & HIGH SCHOOL CURRICULUM GUIDE TRAINING: REPORT FOR THE CALGARY AREA

Stan Kutcher, Yifeng Wei, Mitch Shea, Heather Hines

| Background

The Mental Health & High School Curriculum Guide (Mental Health Curriculum Guide) was developed by Dr. Stan Kutcher, Sun Life Chair in Adolescent Mental Health in collaboration with the Canadian Mental Health Association. Designed to support the teaching of mental health in grade nine or ten Canadian school curriculum, its objective is to enhance mental health literacy amongst both students and teachers. To support the Mental Health Curriculum Guide, a one-day training session (Mental Health Curriculum Guide Training Program) developed by Dr. Kutcher and Ms. Yifeng Wei (www.TeenMentalHealth.org) is offered to educators who will implement the Mental Health Curriculum Guide within their classrooms. The training addresses: the concepts of mental health; the mental disorders that typically onset in adolescence; stigma and help seeking efficacy for mental health problems and mental disorders and importance of positive mental health. The training addresses mental health within the educator's workplace context and reviews the six modules of the Mental Health Curriculum Guide, core and supplementary educational resources and teaching strategies pertaining to school-based mental health and the implementation of the Guide in the classroom. The objective of the training is to improve educators' knowledge of the Mental Health Curriculum Guide and its contents, enhance educator's knowledge of mental health and mental disorders, and enhance positive attitudes towards mental illness and those who are living with mental disorders.

An additional trainers workshop on the use of the Mental Health Curriculum Guide (developed by Dr. Kutcher and Ms. Wei) is conducted to prepare teachers and allied human health and services professionals (such as; guidance counselors; nurses; psychologists; mental health care professionals, youth workers) who have taken the initial Mental Health Curriculum Guide training program to become trainers for the program. This report presents the outcomes of the application of the Mental Health Curriculum Guide training delivered to teachers and trainers from the Calgary Public and Separate School Boards in Calgary in October, 2013.

| Participants

In preparation for implementing the Mental Health Curriculum Guide within classes in Calgary, training sessions were provided to educators and allied professionals within the school and community. Specifically, a two-day session was provided to 25 teachers and trainers. Of these original 25 participants, 24 surveys matched for analysis (1 male, 23 female), and make up the basis of this report. Training was offered on September 30 and October 1, 2013. The sessions were conducted by Dr. Stan Kutcher of the Sun Life Financial Chair in Adolescent Mental Health Team, of the IWK Health Centre and Dalhousie University and Teenmentalhealth.org and Mitch Shea, member of the Sun Life Financial Chair in Adolescent Mental Health team. The first day of the training focused on the basic concepts of mental health and mental disorders, a review of the six modules of the

Mental Health Curriculum Guide, and discussions of teaching strategies and teaching materials that could be used in implementation of the Guide. The second half-day was designed to re-present and discuss key materials provided from the first day, and establish capacity to support classroom teachers in the delivery of the Mental Health Curriculum Guide. Some participants were not classroom teachers but professionals in the field of mental health and employed with the various school boards in the Calgary area. The participants who were teachers taught Healthy Living, Humanities, Drama and Psychology in junior high and secondary school.

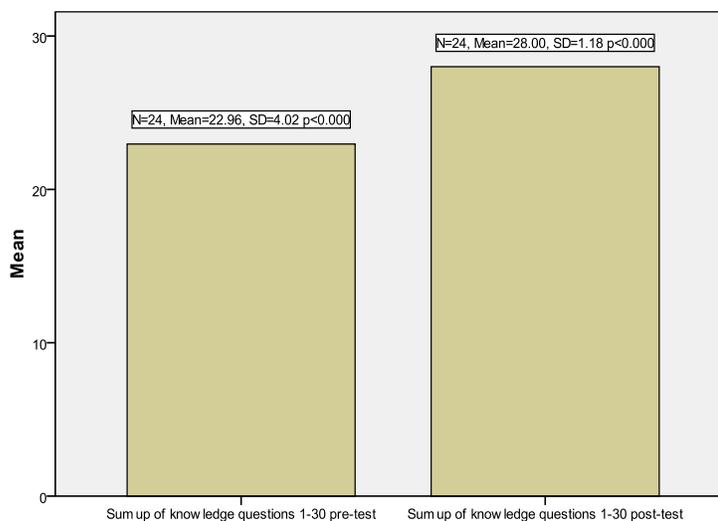
| Outcomes

A total of 25 individuals completed the training program. Participants in the Mental Health Curriculum Guide training completed anonymous knowledge assessment surveys before and after the training in order to help determine the effectiveness of the training. Surveys included 30 knowledge questions, 22 pertaining to general mental health literacy and 8 related specifically to the Mental Health Curriculum Guide. These questions were framed as “True”, “False”, and “Do Not Know” options. Participants were instructed to use this “Do Not Know” option rather than guessing. The survey also included eight questions examining attitudes related to mental illness. These questions were measured with a 7 point Likert Scale, ranging from “strongly disagree” to “strongly agree”. A total positive attitude score out of 56 was calculated. To assure anonymity participants were asked not to provide any identifying information. In order to link participants’ responses between the pre-training and post-training surveys, anonymous linking questions were asked, such as their month of birth, mother’s first name, and postal code. Participants also completed an additional satisfaction questionnaire allowing them to provide qualitative feedback regarding their satisfaction with the training.

Outcomes of the knowledge assessment survey reveal that prior to the training, as a group the educators correctly answered an average of 22.0 of 30 (70%) of general mental health questions correctly, which improved to 28.0 of 30 (87%) following participation in the training program, which is a highly statistically significant change $t(23) = 6.67, p < 0.0001$ (see Figure 1). This is an extremely strong p value statistic, demonstrating a highly significant training result. The analysis also showed an effect size of $d=2.03$. This is an extremely high effect size, demonstrating a highly substantive training impact.

The participants’ attitudes towards mental illness were found to be very positive at baseline (see Figure 2). Their attitudes prior to training averaged 53.04 out of a possible score of 56 ($SD=2.90$), which increased to 53.68 after the training ($SD=3.27$). Although this was an improvement over baseline, this change was not statistically significant. However, the effect size ($d=0.21$) indicates a

Figure 1: Mean of Scores on General Mental Health Knowledge Survey



positive change of attitudes. The relatively small change is likely due to a ceiling effect, in that baseline assessment demonstrated the presence of extremely positive attitudes in this cohort of educators and health human services providers.

Twenty-five participants provided feedback regarding their satisfaction with the training. Using a five-point scale (i.e., 0 = poor; 5= Excellent), participants responded to several questions and were invited to provide comments and suggestions. When asked “Overall, I found the workshop useful and informative” participants’ average

score was 4.97 out of 5. In response to the question “Overall I found the speaker(s) to be of high quality” as a group participants’ average score was 5 out of 5. In response to the question “Overall I learned information and concepts that will be helpful to me in my work”, as a group, participants’ average score was 4.93. When asked “would you recommend this workshop to my colleagues” as a group participants average score was 5. When asked to provide an overall rating for the workshop as a group participants’ average score was 4.96 out of 5. Finally, participants were asked to rate this workshop compared to other similar workshops they have taken. Eighty-five percent of respondents noted that the workshop was “much better” than similar programs while 15% stated it was “better”.

Overall, participants considered the training session to be “excellent”, “very informative” and as providing “extremely relevant information”. The participants enjoyed the speakers and thought the information learned was relevant to their work. Some representative comments from their written feedback include:

“A fantastic use of four days. Would be great if upper management in our board would partake!”

“It was very valuable and allowed for discussion and response to individual questions”

“Most useful workshop I’ve ever been to.”

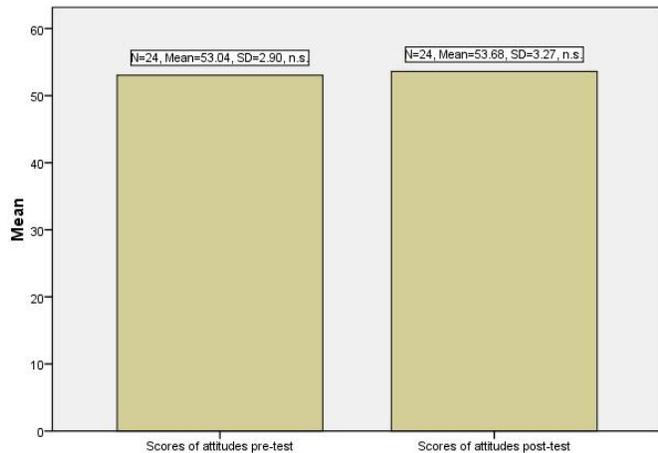
“The neurobiology is fascinating and I would like to and will learn more - because much of this piece is new to me and at times the volume of info was overwhelming to take in.”

“I would recommend that a shorter/intro version/overview of this workshop be aimed at superintendents and supervisors within school boards to help them understand the desperate need for mental health support.”

| Discussion and Conclusions

The Mental Health Curriculum Guide Training Program strongly improved mental health knowledge in participants. Evaluation of the educators training on the Mental Health Curriculum Guide for the Calgary school boards demonstrates that such training is helpful to significantly and substantially improve educators knowledge regarding the Mental Health Curriculum Guide and its contents,

Figure 2: Mean Group Scores for Attitudes Regarding Mental Illness



significantly and substantially improve their knowledge regarding mental health and mental illness, and to enhance already positive attitudes towards mental illness.

The Mental Health Curriculum Guide training also had an impact on decreasing stigma in participants, even in this group of educators who had pre-existing strongly positive attitudes towards mental illness and the mentally ill.

These highly positive results help to set a strong foundation for the Calgary and area school boards to be able to embed mental health literacy into the school curriculum through the application of the Mental Health Curriculum Guide and additionally provides a cadre of trained trainers who can meet ongoing school board training needs and support teachers in the classroom as the curriculum is applied.