

# DECISION-MAKING TOOL:

## Supporting Educators in Selecting Mental Health and Substance Use Resources

### Overview

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The Ministry of Education and Child Care **Decision-Making Tool: Supporting Educators in Selecting Mental Health and Substance Use Resources** was developed as an optional toolkit to support educators to identify appropriate, effective mental health and substance use resources for their learners. This tool aligns with the co-governance model for the B.C. K-12 education system, Learning Resources Policy, curriculum, First Peoples Principles of Learning, and the Mental Health in Schools (MHIS) Strategy.

Boards of Education are responsible for setting policies with respect to the use of learning resources. Mental health and substance use learning resources must align with local policies and the B.C. curriculum, be age-appropriate, and selected for use to support the delivery of a specific lesson, activity, or topic.

The decision-making tool includes four components to support the selection of mental health and substance use resources:

#### 1. Flowchart

- This diagram illustrates social considerations that are connected across five domains: capacity building; accessibility; mental health promotion; cultural safety; diversity and inclusion. This component supports initial reflection when considering new resources.

#### 2. Definitions

- There are phrases and terminologies used in the checklist component which are defined to ensure a comprehensive/common understanding (**bold words** within the checklist will be defined in the definitions section).

#### 3. Checklist

- This checklist includes reflective questions to consider when selecting a resource type (print resources, videos, websites, and presenters).

#### 4. Support Plans

- These supplementary plans are intended to ensure planning/considerations are in place for debriefing activities and support for staff and learners, who may be impacted by their lived and living experiences in relation to the presenter/video/material. They also provide opportunity for reflection of ongoing learning and supports

# Decision-Making Circle: Supporting Educators in Selecting Resources and Presenters

How each domain is represented in the resource will impact its effectiveness on students and staff. Use this wheel to guide your resource selection using relevant domains to positively affect student learning.

## DOMAINS:

### Accessibility

- accessible in the district/school
- affordable
- a variety of formats for all learners to access
- ease of ability to find and interpret content
- supplementary materials are available for use
- age and development appropriateness
- strengthens school connectedness

### Mental Health Promotion

- ways students manage their health and environment
- ways students can identify supports for themselves and others
- ways illness can affect someone's life
- ideas to identify those who may require support
- develop new skills and abilities
- develop ideas on interdependence of health and education
- link mental health to core competencies

### Capacity Building

- a trauma-informed perspective that promotes empowerment and choice
- mental health literacy is apparent in available resources
- the development of social and emotional skills and competencies
- promote development of additional strategies for healthy living

Consider these domains when selecting a resource

### Diversity and Inclusion

- value for all life experiences
- strength for all identities
- empower change
- systemic non-discrimination
- provide voice for all students
- include data from all groups to ensure equity
- build community and collaboration
- create a climate of acceptance and understanding

### Cultural Safety

- trauma-informed practice to develop trust and knowledge
- strengths-based approaches to develop new understandings
- advocate for empowerment
- reduced stigma of mental health and marginalized groups
- culturally responsible data to authentically represent all learners

## Definitions

Phrases and terminologies in the decision-making tool checklist in bold are further defined to ensure a common context and understanding, which is critical from both an audience and resource perspective.

- **Appropriate for the cultural, emotional, and developmental level** – Consider the age/grade level, emotional maturity, and cultural perspectives of the audience to ensure the content meets their level of understanding.
- **Cultural humility** – A process of self-reflection to help understand personal and systemic biases and to develop respectful processes and relationships. It involves humbly acknowledging oneself as a life-long learner when it comes to understanding another's experience.
- **Cultural inclusivity** – This is fostering a climate where Indigenous Peoples and peoples of all cultures are recognized, respected, and reflected without discrimination. School connectedness is impacted by implicit bias and privilege, expectations, sense of belonging and identity, cultural relevance, Indigenous worldviews and perspectives, connection to communities, and many other factors.
- **Demographic of the audience** – Consider the cultures, family, disabilities/diverse abilities, age/grade levels, sexual orientation and gender identities, socioeconomic status of the audience as well as ensure that all these demographics are represented within the content. This will help learners see a version of themselves in the resource.
- **Intersectionality** – Acknowledges that different parts of our identities, such as race, disabilities/diverse abilities, sexual orientation, and gender identity shape the experiences for individuals and groups of people. Intersecting identities can create additional barriers or opportunities. Understanding intersectionality helps to identify and address different forces of discrimination that people experience.
- **Lived and living experiences** – Depending on the lived and living experiences of learners and staff, the content of the mental health resource may intensely impact and potentially distress them.
- **Strengths-based** – A strengths-based perspective is based on the belief that all learners, staff, and communities have strengths, resources, and the ability to recover from adversity. This perspective replaces an emphasis on problems, vulnerabilities, and deficits, while still acknowledging important individual and contextual risk and protective factors.
- **Timing of the presentation** – Avoid Mondays, Fridays, and late in the day, when possible, to allow for monitoring and follow-up after the content has been presented.
- **Trauma-informed** – A trauma-informed practice promotes inclusive and compassionate learning environments; understanding coping strategies; supporting independence; and addressing learners' potential to minimize additional stress or trauma. Trauma-informed systems aim to avoid retraumatizing learners and staff to support their safety, choice, and healing. Trauma-informed practices support all learners whether they have experienced trauma or not.
- **Young people with disabilities/diverse abilities** – A school-age learner with an intellectual, neurodevelopmental, psychological, physical, physiological, sensory, social/emotional, or behavioural impairment or with exceptional gifts and talents.

# Checklist

There are many considerations when one selects resources to support mental health and/or substance use resources. To provide a safe, supportive, empowering, and collaborative experience, resources and presenters need to be **trauma-informed and culturally inclusive**. The following checklist will provide decision-making guidance for selecting resources or presenters.

## Considerations applicable to all resource types and presenters

	N/A	✓	Notes
Have you consulted with the District Leads of Indigenous Education and/or local First Nations or Indigenous community?			
Have you thoroughly reviewed all the content to ensure the information is <b>appropriate for the cultural, emotional, and developmental level</b> of your learners?			
Have you considered <b>cultural humility</b> (yours, staff, presenter) and its impacts on the chosen resource?			
Does the resource contain accurate information, focus on reducing stigma, and promote help-seeking behaviours, while promoting <b>cultural inclusivity</b> ?			
Is the <b>demographic of the audience</b> represented within the resource?			
Have you reflected on the impact of <b>intersectionality</b> , and how the resource will be received by each of the individuals in the audience?			
Considering the sensitive nature of the content is there a plan in place for learners and staff impacted by the information/presentation, including those with <b>lived and living experiences</b> ?			

**Considerations applicable to all resource types and presenters (continued)**

	N/A	✓	Notes
Is the resource <b>strengths-based</b> , and does it provide this perspective throughout the resource?			
Is this resource accessible to all learners and considerate of <b>young people with disabilities/diverse abilities</b> ?			
Have you considered the <b>timing of the presentation</b> and allowed for a debriefing time with learners following the presentation?			
Is this resource <b>trauma-informed</b> and <b>culturally inclusive</b> ?			
Are there multi-language format options available?			
Have you considered having this resource vetted/reviewed by your school district Mental Health Lead(s) or another mental health professional, if one is available?			
Is the content of the material related to grade level curriculum for the learners?			
Is this resource readily available and accessible in your district and community?			
Have you considered sharing the content and purpose of this resource with parents/guardians?			
If you are unsure about the use of this resource, have you considered including your administration in the discussion around the content and purpose?			
Have you reviewed your district / school policy on learning resources? Does this align with the policies?			

**Print resources**

	N/A	✓	Notes
Is the visual layout of the resource accessible to all learners?			
Are there alternative formats available to support the diversity of learning in your class?			

**Videos**

	N/A	✓	Notes
Have you watched the full video to ensure content is aligned with the school district's vision for supporting and promoting mental health and substance use prevention?			
If needed, are there captions available for learners with hearing impairments, English language learners, etc.?			

**Websites/Online tools**

	N/A	✓	Notes
Is the website/online tool user-friendly? Learner level appropriate?			
Does the website/online tool allow for the content to be exported?			
Does the website/online tool have the option of text-to-speech to support all learning styles?			
Does the website/online tool require supervision, or can it be self-directed learning?			

**Websites/Online tools**

	N/A	✓	Notes
Does the website/online tool require additional supports or follow-up?			
Is the school equipped to provide access/devices to support web/online learning?			

**Presenters**

	N/A	✓	Notes
Have you considered if the presenter recognizes the local context and community?			
Have you met with the presenter to discuss the presentation purpose, options, context, and audience? Are they a good fit?			
Have you confirmed the presenter's approach and understanding of the topic to ensure it aligns with policy, definitions, principles, and perspectives?			
Have you identified and connected with someone from the school district to support you with this presentation if needed?			
Have you considered the format and approach to ensure active, engaging, and appropriate interaction with the audience?			
Have you considered time for the audience to ask questions of the presenter?			
Have you discussed the length of the presentation and breaks with the presenter to support the needs of all learners?			
Have you considered whether the presentation materials, props, or equipment are safe, age-appropriate and accessible for the learning environment?			

## Support Plans

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As considerations are checked off in the **Decision-Making Tool: Supporting Educators in Selecting Mental Health and Substance Use Resources**, there will be areas where additional planning/support is needed. This section provides space to think through a full-support plan.

### Support plan

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Detail the plan for staff and learners who may be impacted by the resource/presentation both during and following the session being intentional about those with **lived and living experiences**.

### Debriefing time

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Detail the plan in place to debrief with the learners about the topics covered in the presentation/video/material and provide information to access the school counsellor and/or mental health supports if/when needed.

## Ongoing learning

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Detail the plan (i.e. next steps, follow-up) for ongoing learning and support.