NETWORK of CHAMPIONS

REACH OUT

Co-Developed by

mindyour**mind**

RNAO
Mental Health & Addiction
INITIATIVE

Table of Contents

Background for Facilitators

Mental health is a topic that affects us all. One in five people will experience a mental health issue during their lifetimes. It's important for young people to be informed of these issues, and to be provided with some resources to turn to in case they ever need to access them for themselves or a friend.

Reach Out and Network of Champions:

A game called Reach Out was co-developed by a team of youth and **mind**your**mind**, a nationally recognized youth mental health program that works with young people and professionals to develop relevant tools around the topic of mental health. It was designed to deliver mental health information to young people in the form of an interactive game.

In 2014, **mind**your**mind** was invited to be a part of the Youth Mental Health and Addictions Champions project through the Registered Nurses Association of Ontario, the Ontario Centre of Excellence for Child and Youth Mental Health and School Mental Health ASSIST. Youth and Public Health Leads from Porcupine Health Unit, Thunder Bay District Health Unit, Timiskaming Health Unit, Grey Bruce Health Unit, Toronto Public Health and Niagara Public Health came together to actualize this initiative with the RNAO.

A customized version of Reach Out was co-created with these partners and the Youth Leads in November of 2014, and re-branded as the Network of Champions Reach Out game.

Network of Champions Reach Out is an interactive game which gets students into teams and challenges them to have conversations and think about what they know and don't know about mental health issues, substance use/misuse and mental health advocacy. Youth Facilitators will lead players in playing the game, which is played using a computer, data projector and speakers, and is embedded with video content.

The 'Nuts And Bolts': How to Play

What You Need to Play:

A computer, data projector (or Smart Board) and speakers, some time to set up before playing the game.

- Connect computer to a Data Projector or Smart Board and speakers and adjust screen size and volume if needed.

- Put the Network of Champions Reach Out USB stick into a USB port.

- If the game doesn't start automatically, go to the Start menu on the desktop (bottom left corner) and click Computer. From here, locate the drive where the game should appear. Double click the application to start the game.

- A blank sheet of paper and pen/pencil is recommended, but not required, for each team for the Final Question.

It is highly recommended that Facilitators play the game a few times before facilitating it with a group in order to familiarize themselves with the content and game play.

Setting Up:

- Divide group into equal teams. Encourage players to come up with a name for their team.

- When the game is launched, you'll see an image of a desk with a notebook. A sticky note will appear with options for 2, 3 or 4 teams.

- Select the number of teams you'll have playing and then click on "OK". You'll then be prompted to enter the names of each team in the sticky notes on the right using the keyboard. Note: Team names are limited to 11 characters, so you may need to be creative!

- Press "Play" when team names are entered and teams are ready to go.

- Facilitators should give players an overview of what each category represents:

The Categories:

Youth Champions Questions about mental health, health promotion and advocacy.

Help a Friend Scenario-type questions relevant to how young people can support their peers.

The Stress Effect Questions about identifying and coping with stress.

Trick or Fact Statistics and facts about mental illnesses and issues.

Starting the Game:

- Teams take turns answering questions. Players will know it is their team's turn when their team sticky note lights up in a darker yellow.

- Read the question out loud to the players, and give them time to consult with one another to answer. When they have decided, click on the answer they think is correct. If they get it right, a green check mark will appear beside their answer. If they get it wrong, a red "X" will appear.

- Press the "Continue" arrow at the bottom of the question page to move to the next screen.

- "Pop-up" windows will appear after each question that provide further info about the topic, or that prompt the players to answer a discussion question. It is up to the Facilitator to lead these discussions if he/she chooses to do so. Press the red "Continue" arrow to move to the next question.

- Some questions have a short video clip as part of the follow up to the question. Facilitators will click on the player icon to launch the video, and then press the "play" to start the video. Note: The game will not let you advance to the next question until you've launched and watched the video. However, you may choose to fast forward through the video if for some reason you don't want to watch it.

- "Did You Know" Facts - there are 4 throughout the game that will pop up when a category is cleared of questions. These summarize the main points of information from that category.

Ending the Game:

- Facilitators can end the game by pressing the "Quit" button between team turns (when the screen prompts the next team to pick a category).

- At any point during game play, the Facilitator can press the "Escape" key to exit and end the game entirely.

Final Question:

- When the game has been cleared of questions, or if the Facilitator chooses to end regular game play by clicking "Quit", the final question screen will appear.

- Hand out a piece of paper and pen/pencil to each team. Read the final question out loud to the players and give them time to discuss their answers.

- When teams are ready have them present their answers. Leave at least 10 minutes for discussion.

While You Play: The Big Ideas

Introduce yourself!

It is important to let the players know exactly who you are and what your role is as a Youth Champion. Because you are speaking about mental health and substance use, it's a good idea to remind students that you're not necessarily an "expert" or "professional" on this topic. That way, you can let yourself "off the hook" for not having all the answers to their questions, but still encourage them to find the resources that can help them.

This might be a great time to talk about why you decided to get involved in the Youth Champions project, or just generally what inspired you to be interested in mental health promotion. You may also want to talk about how the point of the game is to start conversations about mental health, substance use, and how we can promote healthier communities.

Sample script:

> "We're going to play a game called Network of Champions Reach Out that talks a lot about mental health, mental illnesses, substance use, and how you can promote health in your school and community. You should know that I'm not a mental health expert. If you have questions about specific things, I may not be able to answer them directly. But I can tell you that this is a topic that I'm passionate about because... We're playing this game together so that we can have a conversation about a topic that is really important and affects us all. Hopefully through this discussion, we can get some great ideas for how to promote mental health in our schools and communities."

Stick to the 'Big Ideas':

While your own personal experiences may be helpful during conversations with students, it is important to avoid speaking about mental health and those living with mental health issues in such a way that will reinforce stigma and fear or reveal private/identifying information about people you know. Even so, personal perspectives and ideas can be a powerful tool to inspire and connect! Just remember to always refer back to the Big Ideas in your discussions.

The 'Big Ideas':

When you play Network of Champions Reach Out with young people, the goal is to get conversations started during game play about mental health. Playing one game isn't going to tell youth everything they need to know about mental health, but a well-facilitated discussion can go a long way to battle stigma. As the facilitator, you're going to want to think about what you're going to share and how you're going to speak about these issues. Highlight any community resources in the game

that are on topic with the discussion, so people can learn more. Here are the main 'Big Ideas' you should aim to get across during game play:

1. Knowledge is power. Facts debunk myths and promote understanding. There are a lot of misconceptions about mental health and mental illnesses. It's important to have the facts!

2. Young people can help themselves or a friend who might be going through a tough time, especially if they have some knowledge about mental health issues and how to get help. Sometimes helping a friend means accessing supports or helpful adults.

3. Mental health isn't just about the absence of mental illnesses. Mental health is about taking care of oneself and being able to cope through tough times. It is also about managing stress and knowing the facts about substance use.

4. You can become a Champion in your community. Young people can create change in their school and communities by informing themselves, advocating for mental health, and knowing about resources in their area.

Watch Your Language!

The language we use when we discuss something like mental health and mental health issues is important. How we use language has the power to inspire, encourage and educate people. Pay attention to how you and your group are using language, and address the issue of language as you have discussions with students.

- If you're having a group discussion, listen for words like crazy, psycho, lunatic, etc. Take the opportunity to use this as a teachable moment. If nothing else, this may at least get young people thinking about the power of words.

Sample script:

"What do you mean when you said the word 'psycho'? Is this a positive word, or a negative word? Where did you learn that word? Where do you hear language like that?"

Guideline #1

People come first. An illness or disability is a characteristic of a person, not the defining quality.

Say:	Instead of:
"People with mental illnesses"	"The mentally ill"
"A person with schizophrenia"	"A schizophrenic"
"People who have/experience psychosis"	"A psychotic"

Guideline #2

People are not defined by their mental illness. Separate the individual from the diagnosis they carry.

Say:	Instead of:
"I have Bipolar illness"	"I'm Bipolar"
"He has been diagnosed with a mental illness"	"He's mentally ill"

Guideline #3

One size does not fit all. Mental illnesses are diverse, and have varying degrees of seriousness, symptoms, behaviours and treatment strategies. Discussing mental illnesses in the singular implies that all are the same.

Say:	Instead of:
"People with mental illnesses"	"People who have mental illness"

Other helpful clarifications/definitions:

- **Stigma** refers to the damaging ideas or stereotypes people might have about those living with mental illness, or the perceived 'mark of disgrace' of having a mental illness.

- **Mental Health** refers to social, emotional and behavioural wellbeing, and is considered an integral part of healthy development.

- **Mental Health Problems/Issues** are challenges to our mental health that are a normal part of life. For the most part, we learn and grow from them and learn to cope. Sometimes, we find ourselves in need of assistance from persons with specialized knowledge and skill to address these problems.

- **Mental Illnesses** are diagnosable, usually treatable illnesses that can affect a person's mood, behaviour, thought processes and day-to-day life. Mental illnesses are varied and complex, and can be caused or triggered by a variety of factors — social, environmental, genetic, etc.

Sticking to the Big Ideas: Tips and Tricks

The point of Reach Out is to get students talking a bit about mental health. The best way to get students talking during the game is to ask them questions or bring up talking points that relate to the questions they are answering. Remember, it's important to facilitate discussion using sensitive language ("Watch Your Language!" page 8) and to steer discussions that start from a personal story to a discussion that is relevant to the whole group. If people do share personal perspectives or stories, try your best to bring the topic back to the game, but not before you thank them sincerely for sharing.

Tips:

1. After each question in Reach Out, a "pop-up" window will appear with a question or talking point. Read some or all out loud for the students. These are great, built-in tools to get conversations started!

2. Ask general questions to get "more" out of the students after a question is answered:

   You seemed to really know the answer to that question right away! How did you know the right answer?

   So you didn't get that one quite right. A lot of people get that question wrong. Why did you think that was the right answer?

   Is anyone surprised by that answer? Why or why not?

3. Topic-specific questions can be a great way to connect the "big ideas" back to specific topics or question categories. Here are some ideas for how you might do that:

SAMPLE DISCUSSION QUESTIONS TO USE DURING GAME PLAY:

Youth Champions

- Why might it be important to work with an adult ally in your school or community to promote mental health? (They might have some expertise, they may be able to help push things forward, they might have a good idea about systems and rules that a young person doesn't know yet, etc.)

- What does the term "youth champion" mean to you related to mental health? (Someone who carries an issue forward, takes up a cause and advocates for change, someone who really lives what they believe - this doesn't mean having perfect mental or emotional health yourself, but being as real and open as you can about the fact that we are all trying to be well and cope through

NETWORK of CHAMPIONS REACH OUT

rough patches. A Champion has real conversations and tries to start initiatives to promote health and well-being for all, etc.)

- What might be some of the challenges a young person would encounter while trying to start up initiatives, activities or events in their school or community? (They might need money or other resources to do their work, they might encounter rules or policies they didn't know about that prevents them from doing their work, they may need an adult ally etc.)

Help a Friend

- If you had a friend that you thought was in crisis or at risk of hurting themselves, what would be the right thing to do? (Talk to them, tell a trusted adult, call the crisis line or Kids' Help Phone to ask for help, etc.)

- What is the difference between having a tough time or a bad day, and being "in crisis"? (Being in crisis might mean feeling desperate, experiencing a time of intense difficulty, trouble or danger, facing a major decision or turning point, feeling a loss of control, feeling in danger of hurting yourself or someone else etc.)

- Helping a friend can be tough. Self-care is really important. What would you do if you were trying to support a friend but were finding it overwhelming? (Take a break, do something you love, talk to a trusted adult, encourage your friend to seek more formal supports, etc.)

Go to **www.mindyourmind.ca/help** for more info about how to help yourself or a friend.

Trick or Fact

- The questions in this category talk about common signs and symptoms of mental illnesses. Do you think every person experiences a mental illness in the same way? Do you think treatments are the same for everyone? (Symptoms may vary from person to person. Treatments may work better on some people than they do for others. Some have more than one mental illness/ issue at a time. etc.)

- What do you think the connection between substance use and mental health is? (Some people may turn to drug/alcohol abuse to try to feel better; some who abuse drugs and alcohol may trigger an underlying problem, etc.)

Go to **www.mindyourmind.ca/illnesses** to find out more about mental health issues and illnesses.

The Stress Effect

- Has there ever been a time where being stressed has actually helped you out? (Studying for a test, getting ready for a presentation, etc.)

- What do you think might happen with people who have no way to cope with day-to-day stress? How would that affect their life? (Might turn to negative coping strategies, make themselves sick, get irritable, etc.)

Go to **www.mindyourmind.ca/wellness** for more tips to manage stress and stay well.

References:

OUT OF THE SHADOWS AT LAST: Transforming Mental Health, Mental Illness and Addiction Services in Canada, The Standing Senate Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology, PART III: Service Organization and Delivery. http://www.parl.gc.ca/39/1/parlbus/commbus/senate/com-e/soci-e/rep-e/rep02may06part2-e.htm#_Toc133223093

Bourget, Beverley and Chenier, Richard. (2007). Mental Health Literacy in Canada: Phase One Report Mental Health Literacy Project. Canadian Alliance on Mental illness and Mental Health. Last accessed Sept. 27, 2007 at: www.camimh.ca/files/literacy/MHL_REPORT_Phase_One.pdf

Government of Canada. The Human Face of Mental Health and Mental Illness in Canada. 2006. http://www.mooddisorderscanada.ca/docs/Human_Face_of_Mental_Illness_in_Canada_October_2006.pdf

Youth Net Research http://www.youthnet.on.ca/main_english.php?section=viewarticle&article=7

Media Smarts – That's Not Me: Diversity and Media http://mediasmarts.ca/sites/mediasmarts/files/tutorials/thats-not-me/index.html

Mind Set: Reporting on Mental Health http://www.mindset-mediaguide.ca/

Enhancing Healthy Adolescent Development Best Practice Guideline http://rnao.ca/bpg/guidelines/enhancing-healthy-adolescent-development

Building Resilient Youth, Toronto Public Health: http://www1.toronto.ca/wps/portal/contentonly?vgnextoid=c-80be29090512410VgnVCM10000071d60f89RCRD&vgnextchannel=dc960c2c0f412410VgnVCM10000071d-60f89RCRD

Parent Action on Drugs: http://parentactionondrugs.org/for-parents/building-resilient-youth/

Ontario Student Drug Use and Health Survey

http://www.camh.ca/en/research/news_and_publications/ontario-student-drug-use-and-health-survey/Pages/default.aspx

Peel Public Health – Don't Drive High

http://www.dontdrivehigh.ca/index.htm

RNAO Engaging youth who use substances E-Learning Module http://rnao.ca/bpg/courses/engaging-youth-who-use-substances

On Self Harm: http://www.cheo.on.ca/en/self-harm

RNAO Social Determinants of Health webpage www.rnao.ca/sdh

Wherever You Live, Wherever You Work: The Social Determinants of Mental Health http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IGLzZJ0CmgE

More Information:

The Canadian Mental Health Association - www.cmha.ca

Center for Addictions and Mental Health - www.camh.ca

www.mindyourmind.ca

www.mytoolkit.ca

Canadian Centre For Substance Abuse - www.xperiment.ca

Canadian Public Health Association - www.cpha.ca

Planning a healthy community - www.planh.ca

OPHEA - www.ophea.net

Youth Thrive - youth-thrive.org