

# Connecting Career Development and Mental Health for Youth in Schools

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# Agenda

1. Welcome
2. An Overview of the CCDMHYS Project
3. Why focus on mental health for youth?
4. What is the connection between career development and mental health?
5. The Partner Symposium
6. The general CCDMHYS strategy
7. Discussion and questions



## 2. CCDMHY Project Overview: Purpose

To explore the connection between effective career development and positive mental health outcomes for youth in schools.

To develop, evaluate and refine career development interventions and attitudes for educators that are most likely to have a positive influence on youth mental health.



# Questions Guiding the Research:

1. How do conceptions and practices of career development as a mental health intervention change for education professionals (e.g., teachers of career curriculum, guidance counsellors, work experience coordinators, etc.) who receive training in career development and mental health?
2. What are the impacts on adolescent perceptions of well-being/mental health when they take required career education courses from teachers who have received training in career development and mental health?



# Research Team

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# The Research Support Team



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# CCDMHY Partners



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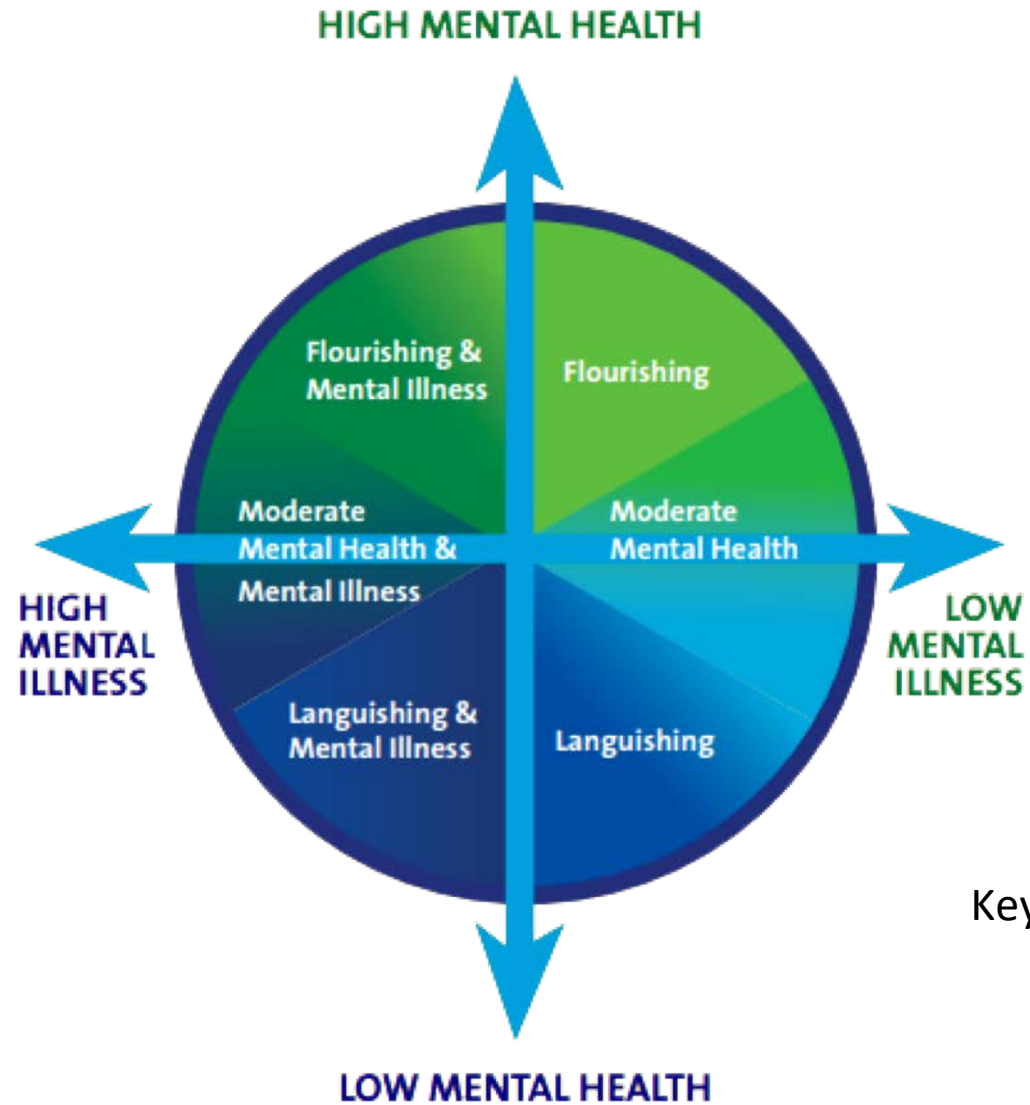
# 3. Why Focus on Mental Health for Youth?

- 70% of adult mental health problems originate in adolescence
- 1/3 of high school students experience anxiety or depression
- Depression is leading cause of adolescent illness, and suicide is the 3rd leading cause of death
  - Vulnerable youth have even higher rates of mental illness and suicide
- Impact of COVID: significant elevation in adolescent anxiety and depression





# What if We Thought of Mental Health Differently?



Keyes, 2014



# How can we best influence youth mental health?

- WHO (2018): “Mental health **promotion** and **prevention** are key to helping adolescents thrive”
- Mental Health Commission of Canada (2016): need to employ targeted mental health promotion programs that are community and **school-based**.



# 4. Why Career Development?

- Career preparation at any time in high school predicts both adjustment and psychological well-being after high school
- Teachers - whether they realize it or not - are powerful career influencers



# Research Evidence: Career Development Interventions Have a Positive Impact on:

**Confidence**

**Hope**

**Self-efficacy**

**Self-determination**

**Purpose**

**Sense of connection**

**These are also common determinants  
of mental health!**



# 5. The CCDMHYS Partner Symposium: 3 Half-day Zoom Webinars

## **Session 1, 10/28/2020: What are we facing and what do we know?**

- Local context; Evidence for connecting career development and mental health (Robertson); Supporting mental health through career development (Redekopp and Huston)

## **Session 2, 11/12/2020: Shaping the Research Program**

- A draft research and development plan, potential indicators of mental health (Socholotiuk and Domene)

## **Session 3, 12/03/2020: Research Ethics and Training**

- How/when should training be provided; what ethical considerations are local (e.g., informed consent) and what applies to the whole project?



# Examples of Partner Input: Training

Teachers of career curricula have varying degrees of experience and preparation in career development

- Expand proposed training to include foundations of career development in addition to strategies for linking career development and mental health

Require artifacts of learning – do not just provide content

- Use of discussions, reflections, practice assignments and the creation of a “community of practice”



# 6. The CCDMHYS Strategy: Participants

1. **Educators** who are providing career services or interventions in schools (primarily in grades 8 through 12)
  1. Teachers scheduled to teach career curriculum
  2. School counsellors
  3. Others who provide career-related services (work experience coordinators, etc.)
2. **Students** in career classes taught by educator participants



# 6. The CCDMHYS Strategy: Method

1. Provide a professional development workshop on Connecting Career Development and Mental Health to educators.
2. Explore how the workshop impacts how the participants think about career development and mental health.
3. Track what elements of the workshop found their way into the actual practice of the participants.
4. Measure the impact of these elements on the sense of well-being and mental health of students in career-related classes that were taught by educators who had participated in the workshops.
5. Compare the results of students taught by teachers who had taken the training with a control group of students in the same course but taught by teachers who did not take the training.
6. Use the data to revise and improve the training, and repeat if possible with new participants.

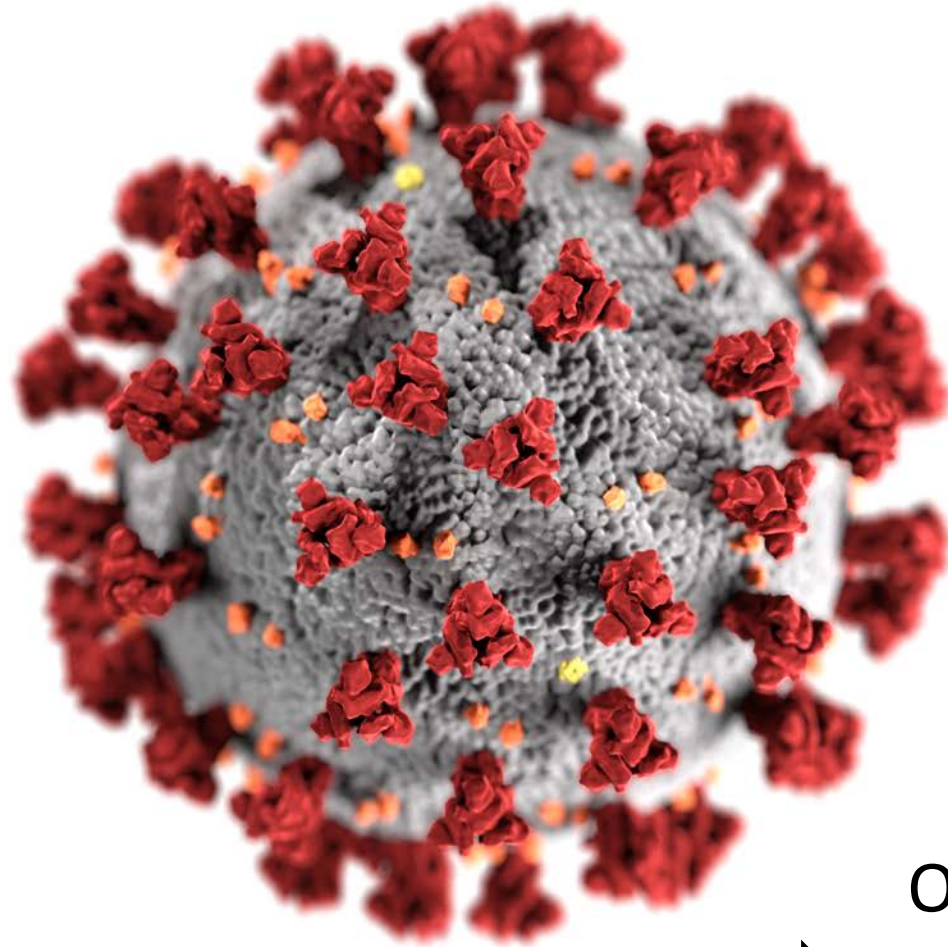




Face-to-Face Workshops



On-Line Modules



Workshop Delivery  
Spring/summer of 2021



On-line access Fall of  
2021 through Spring  
2022

# What does participation involve?

## Educators in the study group ...

- Sign a participation consent form
- Participate in 4 required on-line learning modules (3-4 hours each)
  - Fundamentals of Career Development
  - Everyday Career Development: The Teacher as Career Influencer
  - Career Development and Mental Health Connections
  - Skills and Strategies for Connecting Career Development and Mental Health
  - Optional Module: Documenting and Communicating Impact (TBD)
- Complete an on-line Self-Assessment questionnaire at the end of each module (5 minutes each)



# Participation Expectations: Teachers in the Study Group

- After completing the 4 required training modules, teach the career-related course they were assigned to teach
- Provide time at the beginning of the career course for a neutral third party to come into their classroom for students to sign participation consent forms and to complete the Student Mental Health Survey: Pre-test (about 30 minutes)
- Provide time at the end of the career course for a neutral third party to come into their classroom for students to complete the Student Mental Health Survey: Post-test (about 30 minutes)
- Complete Implementation Checklist at end of the course (about 10 minutes)
- Optional: Participate in a Zoom focus group of teachers after the course (1 hour)



# Participation Expectations: Other Educators

- Complete Implementation Checklist at end of the term (about 10 minutes)
  - Timing to occur around the same time as the teachers are completing their courses



# Participation Expectations: Students

- Sign a participation consent form, and take an information package explaining the study home to their parents
- Complete the **Student Mental Health Survey** on-line\* at the beginning of the career course (about 20 minutes to complete):
  - Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Well-being Scale (14 items; 5 minutes)
  - General Self-Efficacy Scale (10 items; 3 to 5 minutes)
  - Career Adapt-Abilities Scale (24 items; 10 minutes)
- Complete the SMHS again at the end of the career course
- Optional: Participate in a Zoom focus group of student participants (1 hour) after the course



# Invitation to Join a Community of Practice

- Site is external to the research
- Members from all 3 participating provinces
- Share ideas, resources and experiences with project colleagues
- Keep up to date on what their colleagues are doing
- Sustain best practices in career development and mental health



# Current Participation: Pilot Phase

43 Teachers

> 1000 Students



# Next Steps

- Implement principles of connecting career development and mental health for youth at the start of the Fall 2022 school year
  - Collect pre-test and post-test data on students sense of well-being and mental health during the first semester
  - Collect implementation data (concepts they used and how helpful those concepts were) from teachers
  - Run focus groups to better understand experience of each group
- Modify training materials and data collection
- Expand from the pilot phase by either broadening participation within school districts or add new jurisdictions/school districts





# Pause: Questions or comments?



# Thank you!

