Discussion Questions

Understanding Mental Health in Our Community

The speakers shared statistics about mental health in Canada: 1 in 5 Canadians will experience a mental illness in any given year. Only 1 in 4 will get the help they need. Suicide is the #1 health-related cause of death for young people in Canada.

- Do any of these statistics stand out to you?
- Did any of these statistics surprise you? Why or why not?

The speakers taught us the difference between mental health and mental illness. Mental health is a state of well-being that affects our thoughts, feelings, and behaviours. A mental illness is a cluster or pattern of symptoms.

- Why is it important to distinguish between mental health and mental illness?
- Why is mental health important to you?
- Why is it important to be aware of the mental health of people in our community/school?

The speakers mentioned that a lack of knowledge and understanding of mental health can be a barrier to us reaching out for help.

- What are potential gaps in knowledge about mental health in our communities?
- How can we learn more about mental health?

The speakers also mentioned that negative attitudes around mental health can be a barrier to seeking help.

- How do we talk about or treat people experiencing a mental health struggle or crisis?
- What can stigma look or sound like?
- What can we do to change these attitudes/stigma?

The speakers discussed a number of factors that can contribute to mental health stress.

- What are some factors that affect the mental health of people in our community?
- How do they affect your mental health?

Being There for Ourselves & Others

The speakers recommended seeking community supports if we experience a mental health struggle.

- What are some community supports available to us?
- Are these community supports easy for everyone to access? Why or why not?
- How would you improve these community supports?
- What might hold someone back from reaching out to their friends/family?
  - What can we do to change that for the better?

The speakers encouraged self reflection on how we can be there for ourselves.
- What do you consider to be self-care?
- What self-care do you already do?
  - How could you improve your current self-care practices?

The speakers introduced 5 Golden Rules of being there for others (see Resource List).
- Which Golden Rule(s) is the most challenging for you?
- How might you overcome that challenge?

Turning the Conversation into Change

What is one thing we can do today/this week to be better advocates for our own mental health?
- What about for the broader community?

How can we keep the mental health conversation going beyond today's discussion?