



Mental Health
Commission
of Canada

Commission de
la santé mentale
du Canada

HEADSTRONG

Your Speaker's Story

SPEAKER TRAINER TOOLKIT



**BE BRAVE
REACH OUT
SPEAK UP**

ABOUT THIS TOOLKIT

This toolkit will help equip you with the skills and knowledge to share your personal story of hope and recovery from mental illness. If you are a family member or caregiver, becoming a speaker and sharing your experiences with mental health problem or mental illness are also important to an anti-stigma program. By the time you have completed the training process, it is our hope that you know how important your story is to the success of reducing stigma.

ABOUT OPENING MINDS

The Mental Health Commission of Canada (MHCC) was established by Health Canada in 2007 with a 10-year mandate to act as a catalyst for improving mental health systems and reducing the stigma associated with mental illness. The MHCC launched Opening Minds in 2009 to tackle the stigma problem head-on.

Seven million Canadians will experience a mental health problem or a mental illness this year. This means that most of us will know someone who has experienced a mental health problem, yet there still exists the troubling and frustrating stigma related to mental illness. Many describe stigma as more life-limiting and disabling than the illness itself, and stigma is also a major barrier to people seeking help.

In 2001, the World Health Organization declared stigma as the “single most important barrier to overcome.” Over the last five years, Opening Minds has become the largest systematic effort in Canadian history focused on reducing stigma related to mental health problems or mental illnesses, and the only anti-stigma initiative in the world with such a broad base of academic support. Following five years of extensive research, Canada is now considered a world leader in stigma research. The launch of the Youth Anti-Stigma Initiative signals a shift from the research phase to the roll out of evidence-based, anti-stigma programs to schools and communities across the country.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This toolkit is based on the work of many, including research from Heather Stuart, Queen's University, Principal Investigator (Opening Minds, Youth Projects), along with her team of researchers. As well, the fine work of the Durham Talking About Mental Illness Coalition (TAMI) and Ontario Shores Centre for Mental Health Services must be acknowledged as invaluable in the creation of this toolkit. This toolkit and all of the work undertaken at the Mental Health Commission owe a debt of gratitude to people with lived experience with mental health problems and mental illnesses who willingly share their stories of hope and recovery.

Opening Minds, the anti-stigma program of the Mental Health Commission of Canada, would also like to acknowledge the work of:

Calgary Partnership Program
Laing House
Stop the Stigma
The Dream Team
SAS Partnership Program
Beautiful Minds
CMHA Calgary.

We would also like to acknowledge the contributions of:

**CMHA Community
Education Program**
Calgary, AB

Youth Speak
Halifax, NS

Mental Health Matters
Digby, NS

Iris the Dragon
Perth, ON

Edward the Crazy Man
Toronto, ON

Mind Your Mind
London, ON

TAMI Ottawa
Cornwall, ON

**Difficult Lives.
Inspiring Stories.**
North Bay, ON

Elevated Grounds
Toronto, ON

Partners for Life
Montréal, QC

Key 56
Montréal, QC

Partnership Program
Regina, SK



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What is Stigma?

Stigma is the result of negative and prejudicial attitudes and behaviours that are expressed by people to those living with a mental health problem or a mental illness. Stigma is destructive. It leaves a mark of shame that makes people feel different and socially excluded. It is a major barrier to recovery. Among youth, the stigma often associated with mental health problems or mental illnesses can lead to teasing and bullying and, in extreme cases, catastrophic outcomes including suicide. Having a positive experience with people who have recovered, or who are in the process of recovery, from a mental health problem or mental illness can help change negative perceptions and stereotypes.



Why Anti-Stigma

FOR YOUNG PEOPLE?

We know that youth who are struggling with their mental health have difficulty succeeding at school and this impacts greatly on post-secondary dreams and aspirations. We also know that 70% of adults living with a mental health problem or mental illness state that the first onset of their symptoms began when they were teenagers.

- The fear of stigma often delays diagnosis and treatment, yet early intervention can make a dramatic difference in quality of life.
- Only one in six children diagnosed with a mental health problem or mental illness will get treatment.
- 40% of parents say they would not admit to anyone, not even their doctor, that they had a child with a mental health problem or mental illness.

On the positive side, adolescents are one of the best targets for anti-stigma campaigns (Corrigan et. al., 2005). It is during this developmental period that foundations are laid for adult attitudes and beliefs which, if positive, could prevent stigmatizing behaviour in the future.

The Role of Speakers

WITH LIVED EXPERIENCE

Successful anti-stigma programs centre on speakers with lived experience with mental illness who tell their personal stories of hope and recovery. Research shows that when young people hear positive personal stories of hope and recovery, it breaks down barriers about mental illness and can change attitudes and behaviours. This is known as contact-based education and research has shown it to be the most powerful model of learning. (Angermeyer & Matchsinger, 1996; Corrigan et. al, 2001).

These speakers should have recovered from or are managing a mental health problem or mental illness.

Speakers play a 'speaker teaching' role. Through positive contact, students acquire accurate knowledge and reduce their anxiety about meeting and socializing with someone with a mental health problem or mental illness. The personal contact also increases students' empathy.

Research by Opening Minds found that contact-based education is one of the most promising approaches to reduce stigma associated with mental health problems and mental illnesses. The critical ingredients of change include:

- A speaker being able to connect with students.
- Sharing their positive story of recovery.
- Engaging students in an open dialogue after the formal presentation.

The critical aspect is students having a positive experience with people with lived experience of a mental health problem or a mental illness. A negative experience can reinforce negative stereotypes if a speaker highlights disorganized behaviours, symptoms, or poor social outcomes. This underlines the need to ensure speakers are well trained.



Your Role

AS A SPEAKER TRAINER

WHAT WE LEARN FROM TAMI

The Durham Talking About Mental Illness Coalition (TAMI) has held 10 high school summits, four intermediate grade summits, and consulted on seven summits in other areas of the country. TAMI has been using speakers with lived experience in both summits and classroom-based presentations since it was formed in 2002, and through their experiences we have learned the following:

- The key to success of a contact-based education program is the proper training, support, and ongoing recognition of the speaker group.
- Don't rush the process. Make sure that each person who came forward to share their stories followed the same processes for storytelling.
- Individuals reach milestones at different times and the training process is designed to complement their differences.
- The group being trained hears the consistent message that their contribution is the most important piece of the program.
- Speakers are teachers. The process they participate in to become a "speaker teacher" is respectful, caring, and flexible.
- The health of speakers is a priority and they will not be asked to speak in front of a classroom until they are comfortable and ready to take on this new challenge.
- Speakers know that the lines of communication are always open between themselves and the Speaker Trainer/coordinator.
- The training process needs to create a sense of trust between you and the speakers in your youth anti-stigma program.
- TAMI speakers have openly stated that the training process and the welcome they receive from students and school staff has a tremendous impact on their own recovery journey.
- It is important that someone from your organization is who is familiar with this training model is present to support the speaker when he or she is making a presentation.



CONTACT-BASED EDUCATION

When youth have the opportunity to interact with a speaker – a person with lived experience of a mental health problem or mental illness who has received support and training in order to share their recovery journey with youth – and to ask questions, they begin to see the person rather than simply their mental health problem or mental illness. It is an important and crucial step in successful, effective youth anti-stigma programs towards the reduction of stigmatizing attitudes and behaviours among young people.

Speaker Recruitment

Contact-based education is at the core of mental health education and the battle to end stigma. Speakers who are properly trained, supported, and consistently recognized for the strength they demonstrate each time they speak to a group, will want to continue to the best of their ability to remain a part of your team.

If you have an existing speaker base, you may want to share the Speaker Toolkit with them to see if any of the information contained in it proves to help edit and/or shape their stories of hope and recovery.

If this is your first venture into the contact-based model of mental health education, there are a number ways to attract the interest of potential speakers. In some communities, the participating organizations designed a speaker recruitment flyer (see **Appendix A**) that had information on the program, the speaker's role, and the contact information of the speaker trainer. Community Organizations may also have their own networks of individuals who are living and managing their mental health problem or mental illness. Speakers also have their own network and in some cases, a trained speaker on your team will refer a colleague to also take the steps necessary to participate the project.

Regardless of how you attract the attention of potential speakers, each community will have a person (coordinator) who is the key point of contact.

In your role as speaker trainer/coordinator, you will want to know some key findings and insights shared by other areas of the country. For example, **Appendix B** includes sample speaker application forms.

Your first contact with a potential speaker may be via email or phone. Either way, this connection is the beginning of a working relationship where honesty, support, and trust are key ingredients. From the beginning, your potential speaker needs to know from that in your role as speaker trainer, you will teach the speaker the skills needed to be a very well-received speaker; however, you are not the speaker's case manager or individual therapist. You will provide support as the speaker crafts his or her story, practice the story, and presents it to the community group. You will take in the recommendations of the group to assist your speaker with any edits to their draft. Each of your speakers need to know that, when they have completed the process, you will be the person who will schedule them and support them at speaking presentations.

VOLUNTEER RETENTION

Once you have your group of speakers trained, it's important to plan retention strategies, including recognition. Providing an honorarium, covering travel costs, presenting awards, and bringing speakers together for social events shows your speakers that you appreciate them and the work they are doing for the anti-stigma program.



The Training Process



If your program is at the stage where you have more than one speaker in the training process, it is an excellent opportunity to form a small training group. This can provide valuable peer support.

1. Initial contact:

You will receive a call and/or email from someone indicating that they want to become a speaker. This may be the beginning of a long-term relationship, or someone wanting information on the process. Take your time welcoming the potential speaker and sharing that in most circumstances, it may take two to three months or more before most speakers are ready to speak in front of an audience. Let the individual know that you see them as potential teachers, therefore, it is important not rush through the process.

2. Introductory Meeting:

The first meeting will help the potential speaker better understand their role as a speaker and the training process. You can use the Speaker Application (**Appendix B**) as a guideline to start the conversation of having the potential speaker potentially join a very welcoming, supportive community group.

3. Ask the potential speaker to complete a **Speaker Application** to complete and advise that when it is returned to you, it will then go forward to your organizing committee, as well. The potential speaker must also start the process for obtaining a police reference check.

4. Once Approved:

When the application has been reviewed and approved, contact your speaker and ask him or her to begin to write their story. It is at this point that you should give the speaker *Sharing Your Personal Story - A Speaker Toolkit*

Walk them through the toolkit with a particular emphasis on the section I want to share my story. *What do I do next?* (page 5) and the section *Getting to Work on Story Creation* (page 6).

- a. Ask the speaker to connect with you when the first draft is ready.
- b. The speaker may send it to you electronically prior to your next in-person meeting for you to make edits/comments.
- c. Invite the speaker to a First Story meeting to discuss the draft story and offer any feedback.
- d. Remember that communication goes two ways. If you haven't heard from a speaker in training for a week or so, or if you have a gut feeling that a supportive call from you may be in order, get in touch.

5. First Story Meeting:

You and your speaker will discuss the first draft and make adjustments. There may be places that require editing and attention. Go over these parts and ask your speaker to complete a second draft, and schedule another meeting for the two of you.

6. Second Story Meeting:

Talk about any changes and invite the speaker to read the story aloud—hearing your own words in your own voice can take some getting used to. Talk about the presentation skills section in the Speaker Toolkit for helpful tips.

7. Presentation to your program organizers:

When you and your speaker feel that the speaker is ready to present to a small group, invite the speaker to share their story with the program organizers (this is a very helpful dry run!). Remind your speaker that after the story has been shared, the audience of program organizers will ask questions that are similar to those that students have asked speakers in the past. At the end of this presentation, the group will offer you and your speaker helpful feedback.

8. Observation:

Invite your speaker to attend a more experienced speaker’s presentation to get a better feel for the process. This often helps with any anxiety a speaker may be experiencing.

9. Q&A Opportunity:

Invite the speaker to attend a second presentation to experience taking part in a Q&A session. This can be another effective way to reduce anxiety.

10. First School Speaking Session:

When your speaker feels ready, offer the opportunity to share the story to a group of students and answer questions. If you are not facilitating this specific presentation, make sure that you or another trusted person from your organization accompanies the speaker.



A series of horizontal blue lines providing a space for notes, corresponding to the steps listed on the left.

Key Items to Include

IN SPEAKER MEETINGS AND TRAINING SESSIONS

REINFORCE THE SPEAKER'S ROLE IN THE PROGRAM:

- Speakers are 'teachers' – educating youth about mental health, mental health problems, and mental illnesses.
 - The speaker attend training sessions/meetings to understand the program and acquire presentation skills.
 - Each speaker is supported in the development of a 12-15 minute speech highlighting the speaker's own recovery journey.
 - When ready, the speaker tells his or her story to groups of 20 or more high school students, either at a summit event or in a school.
 - With support from the session facilitator, the speaker will answer – in a positive and genuine manner – the students' questions about his or her own experiences.
 - Each speaker must submit to a Police Reference Check. Schools generally require this of anyone that is going to work with students.
 - All speakers must be punctual for all presentations – arrive on time! Communication is key to the success of the program and a speakers need to inform the program coordinator as soon as possible if they are unable to attend a presentation so that an alternate speaker can be arranged.
- > Use the elements laid out in *Sharing Your Personal Story: Speaker Toolkit* as a guide to structuring your training program. This should include story development, taking into account the audience, including key messages, presentation skills and dealing with anxiety a speaker might experience along the way.

Four key messages to be included in presentations are:

1. There is hope – people can and do recover from mental health problems and mental illnesses
2. People are not defined by their mental health problems or mental illnesses
3. People living with mental health problems or mental illnesses can and do have happy and successful lives
4. Everyone has the potential to take steps to reduce stigma

CONFIDENTIALITY

In your role as a Speaker Trainer, you will hear very personal stories. You might also hear personal disclosures from students or teachers during or after a presentation.

Keep the things you hear confidential. This applies to your role as a trainer, as well as to the speakers in your program.

In addition, remember that speakers should never use the real names of family or friends, individual mental health workers, organizations or others when telling their story. Instead, use titles such as my "friend," "brother," "nurse," "doctor" to refer to these people. This will ensure that the speakers are honouring the rules of confidentiality.

When helping a speaker develop his or her story and a bad experience is being shared, public criticism of an individual or organization by name is not allowed. It is okay to talk about these experiences, but specific individuals or organizations should never be identified.

Delivering Speaker Training in Groups

If you have more than one speaker going through the training process at the same time, it is beneficial to bring them together for certain elements. Use the Speaker's Toolkit to help your speakers work on presentation skills and discuss dealing with anxiety that speakers may experience along the way (p.16).

Each speaker brings their story to the training session, ready to read it out loud and receive feedback.

1. Ensure that you allow some time for people who don't know each other to get comfortable with one another. In small groups, you could do an icebreaker or just have a casual conversation over coffee before starting.
2. Give an overview of the training to take place that day – what you will be doing together and how long it will take.
3. Allow for breaks.
4. Practice your presentation – invite each speaker to read his or her story out loud.
5. Allow time for feedback after each speaker has read his or her story (see Giving Helpful Feedback below).
6. Share a list of possible questions that students might ask following a presentation. Ask speakers to think through possible answers.
7. Talk about expectations of speakers, as well as the continued support you will be providing to them.
8. Explain next steps.



Giving Helpful Feedback

Giving feedback can be challenging. It's important to boost the speaker's confidence while communicating what needs to be eliminated, added or adjusted to improve the presentation. Some people can be very nervous about reading their own story out loud and sensitive about receiving feedback, so communication needs to be done in an empathetic manner while also being clear. Using the following tips can help:

1. Always ask the speaker for his or her thoughts on the presentation – before you comment. Now that the speaker has read the words out loud, there will likely be some changes or questions for you.
2. If you are in a small training group, ask the other speakers to give feedback. Ask them to start with positive comments first.
3. Your own comments should outline the positive aspects of the presentation, including tone, pace, gestures, and use of voice, as well as the content.
4. Make suggestions in a way that is non-threatening using phrases such as: "Have you thought of...?," "Another great way to get the point across is...," "Other speakers have talked about..." and so on.
5. Remind the speaker of the importance of the key messages. Let the speaker know if the presentation "hit the target" and if these messages are clear to the listener.



Appendix A

SAMPLE SPEAKER RECRUITMENT FLYER



Interested in Becoming a TAMI Speaker?

Are you living with a mental illness?

Or are you a family member/ caregiver of someone living with a mental illness?

The T.A.M.I. program is always looking for new speakers to help stomp out stigmas associated with mental illness.

T.A.M.I. Speaker Training

The T.A.M.I. Coalition is privileged to have members of the community who are living with mental illness share their experiences with others.

Speaker screening, training, support and Recognition is provided by the T.A.M.I. Coalition to the dedicated individuals who are part of the program.

Winner
Minister's Award
for
Innovation in
Health Promotion
2007
Ministry of Health and
Long Term Care

Winner
IBM
Leading Practices Award:
Summits On Stigma -
Enhancing the Patient
Experience Through
Destigmatizing People with
Mental Illness
2007

"Be the change you want to see." - Gandhi

For more information contact:
Christina Papadopoulos
CMHA-Durham
Community Health Promotion & Public Relations
Tel: 905-436-8760 ext. 107

Purpose:

To bring together community agencies, schools, youth, people with mental illness and other community members to develop and deliver awareness programs for secondary school students in Durham Region. This program was originally created by the Mood Disorder Association of Ontario, the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health and the Canadian Mental Health Association.

In Durham Region a local T.A.M.I. Coalition was formed and has been working on addressing the issues associated with stigma and mental illness since 2002.

Goals:

To eliminate or reduce the stigma associated with mental illness.

To provide secondary school teachers with the appropriate support and materials to implement an in-class awareness program.

To provide secondary school students and teachers with the appropriate support and materials to develop school wide, student driven awareness programs.

To provide an opportunity for secondary school students to learn from people who have experienced mental-illness first hand.

To help students to understand where and how they can access help for themselves and their peers.

Membership:

Whitby Mental Health Centre
The Youth Centre
Canadian Mental Health Association - Durham
Pinewood Centre of Lakeridge Health
Mood Disorders Association of Durham
Durham District School Board
Durham Catholic District School Board
Durham Mental Health Services
Durham Family Court Clinic
Resources for Exceptional Children and Youth -
Durham Region
Centre for Addiction and Mental Health
Community Members
Lakeridge Health - Child, Youth & Family Program

Appendix B

SAMPLE APPLICATION FORMS



T.A.M.I.

TALKING ABOUT MENTAL ILLNESS

Guest Speaker Application

Please note that applicants must be 18 years or older to apply

Date:

Name: (Mr. Mrs. Miss Ms)

Address:

City: Province: P.Code:

Day Phone Number: Call # first

Night Phone Number: Call # first

Cell Phone: Call # first

Email: Call # first

Please indicate which number you prefer we call first

1. How did you hear about the TAMI program? Please be specific.

2. What information do you know about the TAMI program?

3. How do you feel about public speaking?

4. What past experience have you had regarding public speaking?

Appendix B

SAMPLE APPLICATION FORMS

5. How do you feel about sharing your personal story in front of others?

6. How would you feel about having your story on video?

7. As the TAMI presentations happen during school hours (primarily on Thursdays), can you volunteer your time during the day?

Yes: No:

8. As the TAMI presentations are on average 3 hours in length (this includes travel time), how much time can you volunteer? (# per week/ month, etc.)

9. Please describe your involvement with the mental health system?

10. How would you describe your current mental health and/or well-being?

11. Is there a situation/issue that could potentially cause you personal discomfort or concern?

12. Do you have access to transportation to attend speaking engagements?

Yes: No:

Appendix B

SAMPLE APPLICATION FORMS

13. Are you willing to get a confidential Police Records Check?
(Please note: A positive PRC does not necessarily mean that you will be excluded from participating. For further information, please contact the Speaker Trainer.)

Yes: No:

14. Do you have other skills or strengths, which you feel may be beneficial to the TAMI program?

15. Have you read the enclosed speaker job description and are you ready to begin the process?

Yes: No:

Please provide us with two references who are **not** family members:

Name: _____ Relationship: _____
Address: _____ Phone #: _____

Name: _____ Relationship: _____
Address: _____ Phone #: _____

Please submit your application via mail, fax or email to:

***Ontario Shores Centre for Mental Health Sciences
Attention: Abby Whitehurst-Oad
700 Gordon St.
Whitby, Ontario
L1N 5S9***

Fax: 905-430-4463

Email: whitehursta@ontarioshores.ca

Once your application has been reviewed by the Coalition, you will be promptly contacted.

Thank you for your interest in the TAMI Program.

Appendix B

SAMPLE APPLICATION FORMS



BEAUTIFUL MINDS VOLUNTEER APPLICATION FORM

Must be 14 years or older to apply

Please Print

First Name: _____ Last Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ Postal Code: _____

Telephone No. (Res.) _____ (Bus.) _____

Cell No.: _____ Email: _____

Emergency Contact: _____ Phone No. _____

Why are you interested in volunteering with Beautiful Minds?

How did you hear about volunteering with us?

Have you had any academic, volunteer or practical experience related to work in the mental health field? Please describe.

On a scale of 1 to 10, rate how comfortable you are in public speaking (1 being Very Uncomfortable and 10 being Very Comfortable)

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Please check off the times you are most available to volunteer.

Daytime: Mornings _____ Afternoons _____

There may be some Evenings _____ and some Weekends _____

Appendix B

SAMPLE APPLICATION FORMS

Please list your volunteer experience.

| NAME OF ORGANIZATION | LOCATION | YOUR VOLUNTEER ROLE |
|----------------------|----------|---------------------|
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |

Please list your work experience.

| NAME OF ORGANIZATION | LOCATION | YOUR VOLUNTEER ROLE |
|----------------------|----------|---------------------|
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |

Please give three references that we may contact on your behalf. Include paid or volunteer work, professionals, and friends.

| CONTACT PERSON | STREET ADDRESS/CITY | POSTAL CODE | DAYTIME TELEPHONE NO. |
|----------------|---------------------|-------------|-----------------------|
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |

The above information has been provided to the best of my knowledge.

Signature

Date

Thank you for filling out this application with our agency. Please return to:

Volunteer Services
CMHA, Beautiful Minds
Orchard Park
5420 Hwy 6N, R.R. #5
Guelph, ON N1H 6J2



**CANADIAN MENTAL
HEALTH ASSOCIATION**

Grand River Branch



Mental Health
Commission
of Canada

Commission de
la santé mentale
du Canada

HEADSTRONG

FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT:

Mental Health Commission of Canada,
Opening Minds

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F 403.385.4044

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**BE BRAVE
REACH OUT
SPEAK UP**