

PART 5: EVALUATION

5.1 WHY EVALUATE?

Since you and everyone involved put a lot of time and effort into organizing and implementing the program, you probably want to know how well it worked. Did the students learn anything? How did the program affect their knowledge and attitudes? What did they particularly like or dislike about the experience? What would you change if you were to do it again?

Summary and results of past evaluations

Evaluations were conducted of the original Beyond the Cuckoo's Nest program at the Clarke Institute of Psychiatry and later of the camh and partner programs in the three communities. The results of the evaluations conducted in the pilot communities are summarized below.

In the spring of 2000, 278 students from eight secondary schools in the three pilot communities completed evaluation questionnaires. In all cases, school personnel implemented the evaluation. In some schools, students were surveyed before and after the presentation; in others, they were only surveyed after the presentation.

The pre-test measured students' knowledge about mental illness and their attitudes toward mental illness and people with mental illness. The post-test measured their knowledge and attitudes after the presentation. Students were also asked to rate the presentation.

Results

In almost all cases, knowledge scores increased significantly following the presentation. Attitudes become more positive toward people with mental illness, but they weren't completely transformed.

This is consistent with what we know about how difficult it is to change attitudes in a short period of time, and from a single intervention. In the Comments section, students most often wrote that the most important part was the chance to hear people tell their own stories and to have their questions answered.

The following are typical comments about what the students liked best about the presentation:

- “It was real people with real stories, not second-hand information.”
- “I was able to hear different stories and the speakers were very open and answered our questions.”
- “I think that the stories were touching. They made me realize that mental illness is as serious as physical illness.”
- “The interviews were useful because they helped me understand how people with mental illness cope with their condition.”
- “I liked talking with the person who had experienced a mental illness, and the family member.”

There was less consistency in comments about what was disliked; it depended on the make-up of the presentation they attended. The following are some examples:

- “I think with people my age they should have talked more about eating disorders and how we could prevent them.”
- “The presenters should have talked longer and should have had more question time.”
- “I didn’t like that the presenters read the information on the overheads instead of explaining it.”
- “Three people came in to talk about the same disorder (manic depression).”

Copies of the student and teacher questionnaires used to evaluate the presentation are included in the Tools section at the end of Part 5.

5.2 EVALUATING YOUR PROGRAM

It's up to you to decide how much evaluation you want to undertake. The tools included in this guide were developed by the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health during the pilot phase of the project. You are free to use them in your community. It might be helpful to consult with local resources such as community colleges and universities, as well as seeking support from coalition members to tabulate and interpret the evaluation results.

If you use the pre- and post-tests, it's best if the pre-test is conducted approximately one week before any of the preparatory learning activities and under teacher supervision. It is important to complete the post-test within a week or two of the presentation, after the follow-up activities.

It is important to complete the identifying information on the top of the pre- and post- student questionnaires. This will make it possible to match students' responses and compare them before and after the presentation.

Using evaluation to sustain your program

As your program gains popularity, the results of the evaluations can help encourage other teachers and schools to host the program. Schools may be more willing to include the program when they learn other students have favourably received it. Teachers' responses can also be helpful in opening up new opportunities for your program; teachers like to hear how other teachers incorporated the program into their courses and what their overall impressions were.

Make sure to communicate the results of your program evaluation to those that have

In North Bay, the coalition members felt that working together had been both enjoyable and successful. The group is continuing to build on the networks that the program helped to strengthen, and is currently organizing a number of presentations to local schools this fall.

participated in the program. Teachers and students will appreciate hearing about the outcomes; they'll feel their investment of time was worthwhile. It can also provide an opportunity to keep in touch with the school and promote additional opportunities for collaboration.

Positive evaluations also help sustain the efforts and energy of your coalition. Make a summary of the key findings, including written comments. Don't ignore the critical comments. They can be essential to improving the program.

Feedback does not only happen through formal evaluations. Comments received from teachers and students and members of your committee can be equally valuable.

Tips for successful evaluations

Reliable results come from correct implementation and reliable measures.

The evaluations included in this section have been tested to ensure they will provide valid measures of students' knowledge and attitudes about mental illness.

Remember to follow the guidelines on correctly administering the evaluations. If you're going to do a pre- and post-test, it is best to conduct the pre-test approximately one week before any of the preparatory learning activities have been completed in the classroom, and under teacher supervision. The post-test should be completed a week or two after the presentation, and after the follow-up activities.

Create enthusiasm.

Remind participants that their responses will have a direct influence on the program's development, and will help to improve the program for the future.

Share your results.

Communicate the results of your evaluation to those who have participated in the program. Teachers, students, principals and presenters will appreciate hearing about the outcomes and feel their participation was worthwhile.

Don't forget to share the results with everyone who contributed support and resources.

Present the information in time for it to be useful.

If you wait too long to inform people, they may lose interest. Get the word out while there is still a buzz and it is still fresh in people's minds.

Timing for presenting results is key. Make sure it is in time for the program to be considered for the following school year.

Make sure the information is clear and easily understood.

Present your information so that someone who has never heard of your project would understand. Avoid using jargon and tell the story clearly, beginning with a summary of the project. Keep it short and make it interesting by highlighting some quotes and comments from participants.

Prove it.

Support your recommendations with evidence gathered through your evaluation. Quotations from participants can be just as powerful as numbers.

Use positive results to promote the program.

You may want to approach contacts in the local media about doing an article that highlights the results of the evaluation.

CHECKLIST

- ☐ You have discussed the importance of evaluation with school staff and received permission to administer the evaluation.
- ☐ You have made sure the evaluation has been correctly implemented.
- ☐ You have tabulated the results of the evaluation soon after you received them.
- ☐ You have developed a summary of the evaluation results, making sure not to reference individuals' names or other identifying characteristics.
- ☐ You have developed a list of everyone you will share the results with.
- ☐ You have communicated the results to everyone on your list.
- ☐ You have used the positive results of the evaluation to continue to promote the program.

TOOLS

- Student Evaluation — Pre-test
- Student Evaluation — Post-test
- Teacher Evaluation

On the following pages you will find three evaluation forms to photocopy for the students and teachers in the program.

Talking about Mental Illness

STUDENT EVALUATION — PRE-TEST

Today's Date: _____ School: _____

Teacher's Name: _____ Subject: _____

Female ☐ or Male ☐ Birth Date: Day _____ Month _____ Year _____ Grade: _____

A. Please indicate how much you feel you know about each of the following. Circle the number that best describes your knowledge.

	None	A little	Some	A lot
1. mental illness in general	1	2	3	4
2. how people cope with mental illness	1	2	3	4
3. different approaches to help persons with mental illness	1	2	3	4
4. what it is like to have a mental illness	1	2	3	4
5. what it is like to have a family member with mental illness	1	2	3	4
6. the causes of different forms of mental illness	1	2	3	4
7. how to recognize signs of mental illness	1	2	3	4
8. different training and career paths mental health workers have	1	2	3	4

B. Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with the following statements by circling the appropriate number.

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
1. Most people with a serious mental illness can, with treatment, get well and return to productive lives.	1	2	3	4
2. In most cases, keeping up a normal life in the community helps a person with mental illness get better.	1	2	3	4

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
3. People with mental illness are far less of a danger than most people believe.	1	2	3	4
4. Locating a group home or apartments for people with mental illness in residential neighbourhoods does not endanger local residents.	1	2	3	4
5. Locating a group home or apartments for people with mental illness in a residential area will not lower the value of surrounding homes.	1	2	3	4
6. People with mental illness are, by far, more dangerous than the general population.	1	2	3	4
7. Mental health facilities should be kept out of residential neighbourhoods.	1	2	3	4
8. Even if they seem OK, people with mental illness always have the potential to commit violent acts.	1	2	3	4
9. It is easy to recognize someone who once had a serious mental illness.	1	2	3	4
10. The best way to handle people with mental illness is to keep them behind locked doors.	1	2	3	4

THANK YOU

Talking about Mental Illness

STUDENT EVALUATION — POST-TEST

Today's Date: _____ School: _____

Teacher's Name: _____ Subject: _____

Female ☐ or Male ☐ Birth Date: Day _____ Month _____ Year _____ Grade: _____

A. Please indicate how much you feel you know about each of the following. Circle the number that best describes your knowledge.

	None	A little	Some	A lot
1. mental illness in general	1	2	3	4
2. how people cope with mental illness	1	2	3	4
3. different approaches to help persons with mental illness	1	2	3	4
4. what it is like to have a mental illness	1	2	3	4
5. what it is like to have a family member with mental illness	1	2	3	4
6. the causes of different forms of mental illness	1	2	3	4
7. how to recognize signs of mental illness	1	2	3	4
8. different training and career paths mental health workers have	1	2	3	4

B. Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with the following statements by circling the appropriate number.

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
1. Most people with a serious mental illness can, with treatment, get well and return to productive lives.	1	2	3	4
2. In most cases, keeping up a normal life in the community helps a person with mental illness get better.	1	2	3	4

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
3. People with mental illness are far less of a danger than most people believe.	1	2	3	4
4. Locating a group home or apartments for people with mental illness in residential neighbourhoods does not endanger local residents.	1	2	3	4
5. Locating a group home or apartments for people with mental illness in a residential area will not lower the value of surrounding homes.	1	2	3	4
6. People with mental illness are, by far, more dangerous than the general population.	1	2	3	4
7. Mental health facilities should be kept out of residential neighbourhoods.	1	2	3	4
8. Even if they seem OK, people with mental illness always have the potential to commit violent acts.	1	2	3	4
9. It is easy to recognize someone who once had a serious mental illness.	1	2	3	4
10. The best way to handle people with mental illness is to keep them behind locked doors.	1	2	3	4

C. As a result of participating in the program, please indicate how much you agree or disagree with the following statements.

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
1. The classroom activities and presentations held my attention.	1	2	3	4
2. I learned a lot from the presentations.	1	2	3	4
3. The presentations are a good way to learn about mental illness.	1	2	3	4
4. It is valuable for students to be able to ask presenters questions.	1	2	3	4

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
5. The experience of the presenters was relevant to people my age.	1	2	3	4
6. I learned some new information about mental illness.	1	2	3	4
7. I feel better about my ability to talk with someone with mental illness.	1	2	3	4
8. I feel that I know more about the emotions experienced by someone who has a mental illness.	1	2	3	4
9. In the future, I will feel more comfortable when I meet people with mental illness.	1	2	3	4
10. I would recommend this program to a friend who hasn't participated in it.	1	2	3	4

D.

1. What I liked most about the program was:

2. What I liked least about the program was:

3. If you have any further comments on the program or would like to make suggestions for the improvement of the program, please add them below.

THANK YOU

Talking about Mental Illness

TEACHER EVALUATION

We would appreciate your help in evaluating the Talking About Mental Illness program.

Your feedback will help us to improve it for the future.

Today's Date: _____ Grade: _____

School: _____ Name: _____

Date of Program: _____

1. (a) Please name the students' courses that the Talking About Mental Illness program is being incorporated into:

- (b) Approximately how much time was devoted to the suggested classroom activities prior to the presentation?

_____ hours

- (c) Approximately how much time did you spend after the presentation debriefing?

_____ hours

Please describe:

2. How helpful did you find the classroom activities contained in the *Teacher's Resource*?

Not at all helpful 1 2 3 4 5 Very helpful

Please list which activities you used:

3. In your experience, how closely did the suggested classroom activities complement the curriculum guidelines for your course?

Not at all 1 2 3 4 5 Very

4. (a) What did you hope your students would learn from participating in the program?

- (b) To what extent were your expectations satisfied?

Not at all 1 2 3 4 5 To a great extent

5. Do you feel the choice of presenters (e.g., person with mental illness, family) was appropriate?

Yes ☐ No ☐

Please comment:

6. Do you feel that the classroom setting was appropriate for the presentation?

Yes ☐ No ☐

Please explain:

7. Please make comments and suggestions on the presentation you attended (i.e., length, depth, format, content, etc.).

8. What other tools or activities would you like to see included in the *Teacher's Resource*?

9. Overall, how would you rate the program?

1	2	3	4	5
Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory

10. Any additional comments or suggestions?

THANK YOU