

# LANGUAGE MATTERS!

## An Introductory Guide for Understanding Mental Health and Substance Use: A Resource for Educators and School Communities

***Language Matters* is an introductory guide on mental health and substance use for educators, administrators, school support staff, and other personnel who work with children and youth in school communities.**

The guide has been developed to help facilitate conversations, build common understandings, and support practice by defining and discussing key mental health and substance use terms and topics. Developing a common language and shared understanding of mental health and substance use terms and concepts can help to improve mental health literacy and reduce stigma.

This resource was developed in partnership with the BC Children's Hospital's Health Promotion and Health Literacy team.

The *Language Matters* resource provides an overview of a number of key topics, including:

- The importance of mental health for the overall health of the school community
- Cultural conceptualizations of mental health and substance use
- Defining mental health and the different states of mental health
- Common mental disorders
- Mental health promotion, risk, and protective factors
- Self-harm and suicide
- Substance use
- Trauma and trauma-informed practice
- The school community's role in supporting student mental health and wellness
- Creating safe, supportive, and inclusive learning environments for all students
- Mental health professionals in the school, health care system, and community
- Educator well-being



[Download the Language Matters guide](#) with the QR code and share with your colleagues and school community partners.



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