

Learning English with CBC Radio – Living in Alberta



Mental Health and Wellness

by

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CBC

Alberta 
Government

Integration Enhancement

Topic:	Mental Health and Wellness
Lesson:	Mental Illness
CLB Level:	6
CLB Skills:	Reading, Writing
Essential Skill(s):	Reading, Writing, Thinking Skills (Critical Thinking, Finding Information, Problem Solving), Computer Use / Digital Technology

CLB Outcomes	
Reading:	<p>Learners will demonstrate the ability to use online reference sources.</p> <p>Learners will demonstrate the ability to guess the meaning of unknown terms, phrases or idioms from the context without a dictionary.</p> <p>Learners will demonstrate the ability to identify specific factual details and some implied meanings.</p> <p>Learners will demonstrate the ability to read and understand a moderately complex text.</p>
Writing:	Learners will demonstrate the ability to reduce a page of information to a summary.
Language Skills	
Grammar Focus:	Learners will demonstrate the ability to use correct word forms and synonyms in context.
Vocabulary:	<i>biological factors, genetics, nervous breakdown, chemical imbalance, debilitating, disorder, psychological, anxiety, tendency, disturbances, disrupt, emotional, impaired, alterations, seek</i>
Culture	
<p>Many new immigrants experience challenges that lead to mental health problems. Being able to identify factors that lead to mental health problems and knowing where to get help is important in dealing with mental health challenges.</p>	

Websites:

<http://www.albertahealthservices.ca/2745.asp>

www.learnersdictionary.com www.thesaurus.com

Introduction

Before you read, complete the first two columns of the KWL chart below:

K	W	L
What I know about mental health.	What I want to know about mental health.	What I learned about mental health.

Pre-reading

Positive mental health means striking a balance in all aspect of one's life: social, physical, spiritual, emotional, economic and mental. Maintaining a healthy balance in these areas means staying mentally healthy or having good mental health. When this balance is disrupted or distorted it can often be a challenge to regain a healthy balance again.

<http://www.albertahealthservices.ca/2745.asp>

Many new immigrants to Canada experience a number of challenges when settling into their new home. These challenges could result in mental health problems such as stress. Some new immigrants have experienced traumatic events in their lives before moving to Canada. These traumatic events such as war can also lead to mental health problems. Knowing where to turn for help is important in addressing mental health challenges.

Pre-reading questions/ Food for thought

Can you think of one example in each aspect on one's life that could lead to an imbalance in life? The aspects of one's life are social, physical, spiritual, emotional, economic and mental.

Main Reading

Title: Mental Illness

Glossary¹

1. Bipolar disorder means a mental illness in which a person experiences periods of strong excitement and happiness followed by periods of sadness and depression
2. Mental means of or relating to the mind
3. Schizophrenia means a very serious mental illness in which someone cannot think or behave normally and often experiences delusions
4. Psychiatric means of or relating to mental disorders

As you read the selection, use *context clues* to help you figure out the meaning of the following words that you will come across: *biological factors, genetics, nervous breakdown, chemical imbalance, debilitating*

Reading Strategy Tip: The main idea is the most important idea in a paragraph. One sentence in a paragraph often states the main idea. This sentence can appear anywhere in the paragraph. The other sentences in a paragraph usually give details that tell more about the main idea. You can find the main idea sentence by asking yourself “Which sentence tells me what the paragraph/ section is about”. As you read each section of the selection, identify the sentence that is the main idea of each section.

This selection is part of a longer document taken from <http://www.albertahealthservices.ca/2745.asp>

¹ Definitions taken from www.learnersdictionary.com

What is mental illness?

Mental illness is not a single disease but a broad classification for many mental health problems. A mental health problem might also be described as a mental disorder, poor mental health, psychiatric illness, nervous breakdown and burnout, to name a few.

Mental health problems are health conditions that are characterized by alterations in thinking, mood, or behaviour (or a combination of these) associated with distress and/or impaired functioning.

How many people are affected by mental illness?

Mental health problems cause major changes in a person's thinking, emotional state and behaviour, and disrupt the person's ability to work and carry on their usual personal relationships.

Mental health problems affect more people than imagined. One in three Canadians will experience a mental health problem at some point in their life. One in five Canadians will experience a mental health problem over the course of a year.

The World Health Organization (WHO) has stated that six out of the 10 leading causes of 'years lived with disability', in developed regions, are mental health diagnoses.

What are the more common types of mental health problems?

There are many different types of mental health problems. Some common ones are depression and anxiety.

Depression affects approximately two million Canadians 20 years and older at some point in their lives. Depression often occurs with other mental health problems and with physical illnesses such as coronary heart disease, stroke and physical disabilities. There are approximately 2.5 million Canadians 20 years and older who live with an anxiety disorder.

Schizophrenia and bipolar disorder (manic depression) are less common but can be debilitating to the persons experiencing them.

What causes mental illness?

Mental illness has no single cause. However, it is most likely several factors together that lead to mental illness. For example, recent evidence has shown that many of the major mental illnesses involve chemical imbalances in the body.

Mental illnesses are:

- biological - linked with disturbances in the brain or other body-system chemistry,
- psychological, linked with disturbances in thought or emotion,
- and social, linked with life events and stresses.

Mental health professionals account for all three areas of a person's life when they design a plan for dealing with the illness.

Biological factors that may affect whether someone becomes seriously mentally ill include:

- Pre-natal damage
- Birth trauma
- Viral infection
- Brain chemistry

Genetics may play a part, too. Studies show that close relatives of someone with schizophrenia or an affective disorder are much more likely to have the same illness. However, people don't inherit the illness itself. They just inherit the tendency to get it.

Psychological and social factors could include:

- lack of support from relationships
- family violence
- major changes in life
- child abuse
- unemployment

The above information has been adapted from the Canadian Mental Health Association.

How do I help a friend, family member, acquaintance or co-worker who I believe is experiencing a mental health problem?

Being aware of the signs and symptoms of someone experiencing a mental health problem is the first step. [Mental Health First Aid Canada \(http://www.mentalhealthfirstaid.ca\)](http://www.mentalhealthfirstaid.ca), which is based on the model of medical first aid, teaches participants how to help someone showing signs of a mental health problem or experiencing a mental health crisis.

One of the ways you can help someone who you think is experiencing a mental health problem is encourage them to seek professional help. Encourage them to see a family doctor, a psychologist, or a qualified mental health therapist.

Another way to help someone experiencing a mental health problem is to simply listen non-judgmentally and reassure them that you will help them get the appropriate help.

Reading Comprehension

1. What are some of the effects of mental illness?
2. List the most common types of mental health problems.
3. What are the three factors that could lead to mental illness?
4. How can you help someone who may be experiencing a mental health problem?
5. Give an example of a major change in life that could be a factor leading to a mental health problem.

Vocabulary Development

A. Context Clues

Use context clues from the reading to guess the meaning of the following words: *biological factors, genetics, nervous breakdown, chemical imbalance, debilitating*

B. Definition Matching

The words in italics on the next page are taken from the reading. These words are also found on the *list of the first 2000 most commonly used words of English* and on the *Academic Word List*. Match the words to the correct definition and find the part of speech. The first one has been done for you as an example.

Disorder, psychological, anxiety, tendency, disturbances, disrupt, emotional, impaired, alterations, seek

	Word	Part of speech	Definition
1.	Anxiety	Noun	fear or nervousness about what might happen
2.			relating to a strong feeling such as love, anger, joy, hate, or fear
3.			to ask for help, advice, etc.
4.			a physical or mental condition that is not normal or healthy
5.			an unhealthy physical or mental condition in which something is not normal
6.			the act, process, or result of changing something
7.			of or relating to the mind
8.			a quality that makes something likely to happen or that makes someone likely to think or behave in a particular way
9.			made weaker or worse
10.			to cause something to be unable to continue in the normal way : to interrupt the normal progress or activity of something

C. Collocations

Words that are used in a certain way together are called collocations. A collocation is a particular combination of words. Take the word “fire”. Collocations of the word “fire” are *truck* and *fighter* – “fire truck” and “fire fighter” for example. Use online reference sites such as www.thesaurus.com or www.dictionary.com or www.learnersdictionary.com to find the collocations of “mental” and “physical”. Complete the table below. The first one has been done for you as an example.

Mental	Physical
Mental attitude	Physical ability

Reading Strategy

Identifying the main idea

The selection is divided into sections and each section has a heading. You will notice that there are several sentences in a section. One sentence states the main idea of that section. The main idea of a section can be found in a sentence that tells us what that section is about. The other sentences in the section provide details and specific information to support the main idea. Read the selection again. As you read note down the sentence that states the main idea in the table provided below. The first one has been done for you as an example.

Section heading	Main idea
What is mental illness?	Mental illness is not a single disease but a broad classification for many mental health problems.
How many people are affected?	
What are the more common types of mental health problems?	
What causes mental illness?	
How do I help a friend, family member, acquaintance or co-worker who I believe is experiencing a mental health problem?	

Grammar Focus / Pragmatic Competence

The sentences below are taken from the reading selection. Replace each highlighted word with its synonym in the correct word form. To do this you will need to identify the part of speech of the key word and then replace it with its synonym using the correct part of speech (and tense in the case of verbs). A list of synonyms has been provided for you but they are not necessarily in the correct word form. The first one has been done for you as an example.

Synonyms

Disturbance, looked for, imperfection, biggest, change, probable, definition, causes, undergo, pushing

Use the correct form of the synonym (verb, noun, adverb etc.) and the correct tense if it is a verb

Mental health problems are health conditions that are **characterized**¹ by **alterations**² in thinking, mood, or behaviour (or a combination of these) associated with distress and/or **impaired**³ functioning.

Mental health problems cause **major**⁴ changes in a person's thinking, emotional state and behaviour, and **disrupt**⁵ the person's ability to work and carry on their usual personal relationships.

Mental illness has no single cause. However, it is most **likely**⁶ several **factors**⁷ together that lead to mental illness.

One of the ways you can help someone who you think is **experiencing**⁸ a mental health problem is **encourage**⁹ them to **seek**¹⁰ professional help. Encourage them to see a family doctor, a psychologist, or a qualified mental health therapist.

Mental health problems are health conditions that are defined¹ by _____² in thinking, mood, or behaviour (or a combination of these) associated with distress and/or _____³ functioning.

Mental health problems cause _____⁴ changes in a person's thinking, emotional state and behaviour, and _____⁵ the person's ability to work and carry on their usual personal relationships.

Mental illness has no single cause. However, it is most _____⁶ that several _____⁷ together that lead to mental illness.

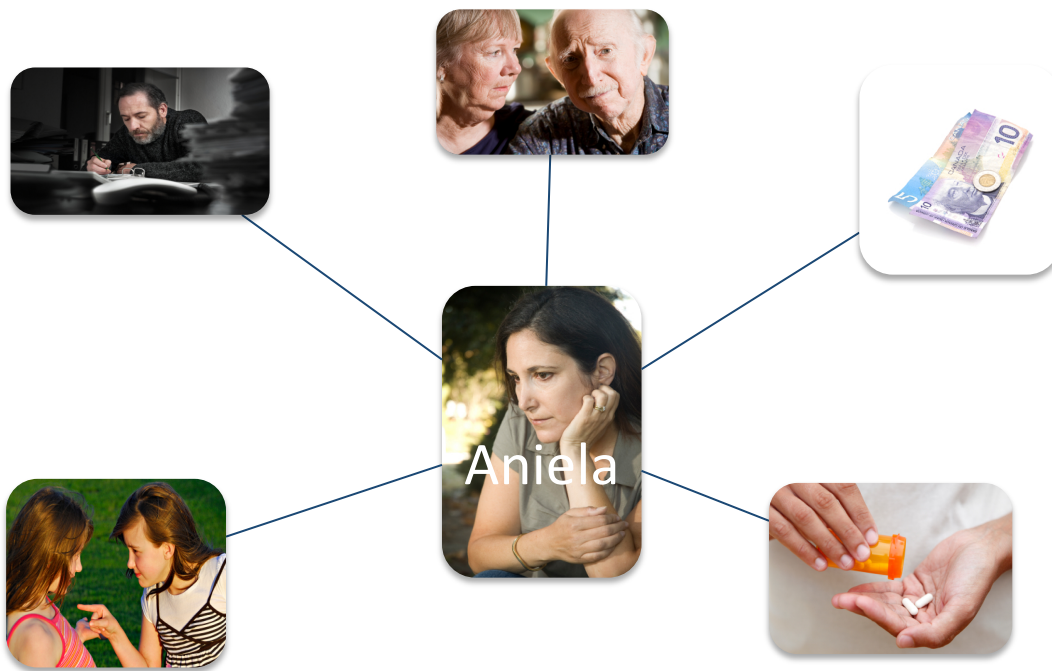
One of the ways you can help someone who you think is _____⁸ a mental health problem is _____⁹ them to _____¹⁰ professional help. Encourage them to see a family doctor, a psychologist, or a qualified mental health therapist.

Link to Essential Skills

Essential skills are the skills needed for work, learning, and life (www.hrsdc.gc.ca). They are enabling skills that help you perform daily tasks as well as tasks required on the job. In this section of the lesson you will focus on **critical thinking skills, finding information, and computer use skills** to analyze a series of pictures that present a problem and find possible solutions to the problem.

Instructions

The pictures below represent different challenges in Aniela's life. Aniela and her family recently moved to Edmonton, Alberta. Life has not been easy since the move. Look at the picture diagram below and identify the challenges Aniela may be facing. List the possible effects of these challenges. Then suggest where she can get help.



Challenges Aniela is facing

Effects of Aniela's challenges

Where to get help

(Take a look at these websites: <http://www.albertahealthservices.ca/2726.asp> ,
http://www.cmha.ca/branch_locations/alberta-division/) Note down any contact
information.

Answer Keys

Reading Comprehension

1. When someone has a mental illness they are not able to perform their daily tasks and routines well. Their relationships with other people suffer.
2. Anxiety and depression are the most common types of mental health problems.
3. The three factors that could lead to mental illness are biological, psychological, and social.
4. You can encourage the person to get professional help and you can be a good non-judgemental listener.
5. **** Answers will vary****. An example of a major change in life that could be a factor leading to a mental health problem is moving to a new country. Other major changes could be changing jobs or school.

Vocabulary Development

A. Context Clues

1. *Biological factors* means the things that cause something to happen to life and living things
2. *Genetics* means the scientific study of how genes (the parts of a cell that control or influence the appearance, growth, etc., of a living thing) control the characteristics of plants and animals
3. *Nervous breakdown* means a sudden failure of mental health that makes someone unable to live normally
4. *Chemical imbalance* means a state or condition in which different chemical substances do not occur in equal or proper amounts
5. *Debilitating* means making (someone or something) weak : reducing the strength of (someone or something)

B. Definition Matching

	Word	Part of speech	Definition
1.	Anxiety	Noun	fear or nervousness about what might happen
2.	Emotional	Adjective	Relating to a strong feeling such as love, anger, joy, hate, or fear
3.	Seek	Verb	to ask for help, advice, etc.
4.	Disorder	Noun	a physical or mental condition that is not normal or healthy
5.	Disturbance	Noun	an unhealthy physical or mental condition in which something is not normal
6.	Alteration	Noun	the act, process, or result of changing something
7.	Psychological	Adjective	of or relating to the mind
8.	Tendency	Noun	a quality that makes something likely to happen or that makes someone likely to think or behave in a particular way
9.	Impaired	Verb	Made weaker or worse

10.	Disrupt	Verb	to cause something to be unable to continue in the normal way : to interrupt the normal progress or activity of something
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C. Collocations * Answers will vary**

Mental	Physical
Mental ability	Physical ability
Mental age	Physical condition
Mental illness	Physical change
Mental anguish	Physical address
Mental block	Physical state

Reading Strategy

Section heading	Main idea
What is mental illness?	Mental illness is not a single disease but a broad classification for many mental health problems.
How many people are affected?	Mental health problems affect more people than imagined
What are the more common types of mental health problems?	There are many different types of mental health problems
What causes mental illness?	However, it is most likely several factors together that lead to mental illness.
How do I help a friend, family member, acquaintance or co-worker who I believe is experiencing a mental health problem?	Being aware of the signs and symptoms of someone experiencing a mental health problem is the first step

Grammar Focus / Pragmatic Competence

1. Defined	2. Changes	3. Imperfect	4. Big	5. Disturb
6. Probable	7. Causes	8. Undergoing	9. Push	10. Look for

Reading –Writing Link

*Summaries will vary**

Link to Essential Skills

Responses will vary

Challenges

- 3 small children / 3 babies
- Finances / money
- Elderly parents who need help
- Constant headaches so she is always taking pills
- Unhealthy and unemployed husband who is depressed

Effects of Aniela's challenges

- Stress
- Anxiety
- Depression
- Aniela may not be able to take care of her children well because she is not well.
- She may not be able to go to work because she is not well.

Where to get help

1. She can call the Canadian Mental Health Association in Edmonton (780) 482-6576 and enroll in a program that will help her and her family.
2. She can contact the Mental Health Helpline, available 24/7: 1-877-303-2642 and speak to a trained professional who can provide her with useful information and resources.
3. She can call a trusted friend who is willing to listen.