



Dear Stigma-Free Community,

Welcome to our October Highlights Newsletter!

In this issue, we'll explore ways to practice mindfulness beyond meditation, share exciting news about Alberta's new mental health CASA classrooms, and provide opportunities for school staff to bring mental health education to their students.

- **Presenter Spotlight:** Meet one of our incredible presenters who is breaking mental health stigma through our [Virtual Stigma-Free Presentations](#).

- **Mindfulness Tips:** Learn simple ways to practice mindfulness, reduce stress, and improve your well-being – even if you don't enjoy meditation.
- **A Step Forward for Youth Mental Health:** Learn about Alberta's progress in supporting students' well-being with the CASA Classrooms program.
- **Save the Date!:** Online Legacy Learning Event on November 26, 2024

Meet Jessica



**V I R T U A L S T I G M A - F R E E
P R E S E N T E R**

Meet Jessica, one of our talented [Stigma-Free Presenters!](#)

Jessica is currently in school to become a holistic nutritionist. She is very passionate about mental health, physical health, and is constantly learning about how to improve both. She has also studied psychology for 3 years but had to leave in her final year of her bachelor's degree due to medical reasons. Although life did not go according to plan, she took what life handed her and made something wonderful from it.

She has learned that you can't always choose what life throws at you, but what you do with it is up to you. She is resilient and has taught herself how to find

gratitude in every circumstance, while still acknowledging that certain circumstances can be difficult and even painful at times. She is passionate about helping others do the same.

She is grateful to have the opportunity to be able to share the words she wished she could have heard while she was going through a dark time and hopes to help others find light. If her story can help even one person, she finds it all worth it.

Presentation Topics:

Anxiety, depression, obsessive compulsive disorder (OCD), disordered eating, chronic pain, physical and mental health challenges, finding peace & gratitude.


3 ways to describe Jessica's talk:

- Inspiring
- Hopeful
- Empowering

Our [Virtual Stigma-Free Presentations](#) provide a platform for individuals like Jessica to share their impactful personal stories with students and reduce mental health stigma. Each 45-minute session also features a co-presenter who facilitates an online presentation based on mental health literacy, applying their informed knowledge around mental health. Since 2021, we've reached over **58,600 students** through our presentations.

School staff: Join the movement and provide vital mental health education for your students!

[Book a Presentation for Your School Now](#)

A photograph of a person with long dark hair, seen from behind, sitting in a meditative pose on a wooden dock. The dock extends into a calm body of water. In the background, there is a dense line of green trees under a sky with soft, golden light, suggesting a sunset or sunrise. The overall mood is peaceful and serene.

Practicing Mindfulness:

Finding Balance in Everyday Life

When you think of mindfulness, guided meditation may come to mind. Meditation is an effective way to practice mindfulness; however, it isn't the only path, as it may not resonate with everyone. Luckily, there are many ways to integrate mindfulness into your everyday life.

To be mindful is to be fully present and in the moment, aware of your surroundings, emotions, and physical sensations. You can practice mindfulness anywhere and at any time. Here are a few ways to be mindful that don't require guided meditation:

- **Mindful walking:** Take short walks in nature, focusing on your environment. Notice the trees, colours, and sounds around you. If you catch yourself getting distracted by your thoughts, gently bring your attention back to your surroundings.
- **Mindful eating:** At your next meal, set aside distractions and take note of the texture, flavour, and aroma of your food.
- **Listen to music:** Focus on the lyrics, melody, and feelings or sensations that the music evokes within you.
- **Focus on your senses throughout the day:** Whether you are at work or relaxing at home, periodically tune into your senses using the 5-4-3-2-1

exercise. Focus on 5 things you can see, 4 things you can touch, 3 things you can hear, 2 things you can smell, and 1 thing you can taste.

Mindfulness for Rural Residents: Learn how mindfulness can help farmers reduce anxiety, enhance their mental health, and even improve their decision-making. Plus, access the no-cost Rural Mental Wellness Toolkit for more stress management and mental health resources designed specifically for rural residents.

[Learn More About Mindfulness for Rural Residents](#)

[Access the Rural Mental Wellness Toolkit](#)

Mindfulness for School Staff: Educators spend a lot of time and energy supporting their students, but prioritizing their own wellness is essential to boost resilience and reduce the risk of burnout. Discover mindfulness resources and practices that can be done in 7 minutes or less – perfect for busy educators looking to reduce stress and be more present when interacting with students.

[Mindfulness Practices for School Staff](#)



Exciting News!

Alberta's New
Mental Health Classrooms
for Children and Youth

Alberta has taken a significant step forward in addressing child and youth mental health with the launch of nine new [CASA Classrooms](#)! These specialized mental health classrooms provide support for students coping with mental health challenges. With the help of mental health professionals, support staff, and a teacher, the classrooms allow students to continue learning while receiving individualized treatment. Students can receive individual group programming, psychiatric care, and medication management.

The program also offers mental health education to caregivers, supporting them in caring for their child. After being in the program for about half of the school year, students are then supported in transitioning back to their home school. We are thrilled to learn about this innovative approach to mental healthcare for students!

There are now 17 CASA Mental Health Classrooms operating in schools across Alberta. This is a third of the way to the Alberta government's goal of opening up to 60 CASA Mental Health Classrooms, which are estimated to support 1,500 students per year.

Congratulations CASA Mental Health for your outstanding contribution to helping young people in schools!

[Learn More About CASA's Mental Health Classrooms](#)

Let's continue to work together to prioritize students' mental health.

Are you a school staff member looking for ways to implement mental health education at your school?

Our Stigma-Free School Program equips educators, school counsellors, parents/guardians, and students with accessible and exciting mental health resources. Get started today:

[Browse the Stigma-Free School Program](#)



Save your family thousands of tax dollars by investing 75 minutes this month, in the comfort of your living room.

Will we have enough retirement income?

How can we take care of our family?

Those were the biggest worries, shared, in a Big Impact Giving survey, by over 1400 people like the couple above. The couple above are smiling because of the plans they put into place that wiped their worries away.

They know what over twelve million Canadians over 55, don't. This upcoming online session will share the secrets that kept their income intact, placed their net worth and family first while moving Revenue Canada to the end of the line.

We humbly invite you as our guest, to an important legacy event to help you learn what that couple already know.

ONLINE LEGACY LEARNING EVENT

Tuesday, November 26th, 2024, 4:00-5:15 pm PST

Zoom details provided to registrants

Guest spots are limited, to ensure your place at the event, please contact: info@stigmafreementalhealth.com



**THANK YOU FOR
YOUR SUPPORT**

By using our resources and spreading the word about our programs, you are bringing us closer to achieving our shared goal of creating a world free of stigma.

Together, we can bring life-changing mental health resources to schools and rural communities. If you have any questions about our programs, please reach out to us at info@stigmafreementalhealth.com.

With gratitude,
Andrea Paquette, President, SFMHS and the Stigma-Free Team



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