



DECEMBER Newsletter

Dear Stigma-Free Community,

As we transition into the last month of 2024, our Stigma-Free Team is focused on helping school staff prepare for the coming year! We are sharing a variety of resources for educators to create inclusive classrooms and prevent bullying. Plus, learn about our new Rural Minds Matter Campaign and get involved to support rural mental health.

- **Today is Giving Tuesday** - Please consider a [donation](#) to Stigma-Free Mental Health Society!
- **Event Recap:** Andrea and Mike's [Rural Minds Matter](#) Information Session in Fort St. John, BC
- Start a [Stigma-Free Club](#) at Your School in 2025
- Class Activities and [Resources](#) for Anti-Bullying Day (December 17th)



Giving Tuesday

Our Programs Change Lives

“

If people don't go out to get help they can't get better. This stuck out to me because I didn't realize how hard it is for some people to get help.

~Grade 11 Student, Eagle Butte Secondary



Stigma-Free Presentation Student Feedback

Today is Giving Tuesday, Let's Break the Stigma Together!

On this Giving Tuesday, let's make a difference in the lives of countless individuals, especially our youth and those in rural communities. Your generous donation to the Stigma-Free Mental Health Society will directly contribute to creating a more understanding and supportive world.

Why Your Support Matters

Your donation will...

Empower Students and Educators: Fund [essential mental health education programs in schools](#), equipping students with the tools to navigate challenges and build resilience.

Support Rural Communities: [Provide vital resources](#) and training to individuals in rural areas, often facing unique barriers to accessing mental health services.

Break Down Stigma: Promote awareness and understanding of mental health issues, challenging negative stereotypes and fostering empathy.

Together, we can create a future where everyone feels valued, supported, and empowered to seek help.

Join us in our mission to break the stigma and build a mentally healthier, supported community.

Please [Donate Today](#) and Let's Make a MEANINGFUL difference together.

*SFMS now accepts Securities making your donating experience flexible and beneficial.

[Please Donate Today!](#)

RURAL MINDS MATTER AWARENESS CAMPAIGN

FORT ST. JOHN EVENT HIGHLIGHTS



In November, Andrea Paquette, President of the Stigma-Free Mental Health Society, and Mike Skrypnek, our Rural Minds Matter Campaign Lead, hosted another successful event to promote mental wellness in rural communities! The event brought together residents of Fort St. John to discuss the [Rural Minds Matter Awareness Campaign](#), an anti-stigma and mental health awareness campaign to reach people living in rural or remote communities across Northern BC.

The information session had a fantastic turnout, and Andrea and Mike had the opportunity to connect with passionate community leaders. They gained valuable insights about our [Rural Peer Support Fundamentals Training](#), which is tailored to the community's unique needs. Participants were excited to hear there is a high demand for our services and programs, and SFMHS is looking forward to providing rural residents with the skills needed to support one another and start their own peer support groups in the future.

Thank you to Fort St. John and District Chamber of Commerce, City of Fort St. John and to

everyone who attended. Together, we are paving the way for increased mental health awareness and assistance in Northern BC.

[Learn More About the Rural Minds Matter Awareness Campaign and How to Get Involved!](#)

| Start a Stigma-Free Club at Your School in 2025



| Stigma-Free Clubs



Want to empower students to make a difference in their school community and support mental health advocacy?

Launch a Stigma-Free Club today! These clubs are led by students with the help of a Champion (educator or school staff) and provide youth with:

- **Peer support and connection** in a nonjudgmental space.
- **Educational resources** to promote awareness and understanding of mental health and stigma.
- **Opportunities for advocacy and leadership** development through organizing campaigns and events.

What Students Are Saying About Stigma-Free Clubs


Visit our [Stigma-Free Clubs page](#) to watch students from Queen Margaret School in Duncan, BC share the positive impact their club has had on their school community.

Our Stigma-Free Framework makes it easy for students and school staff to start their own clubs. It provides guidelines for creating a club, tips on running productive meetings, and more.

[Request the Stigma-Free Framework](#) to get started!



... ANTI BULLYING DAY



December 17th is
Anti-Bullying Day:
Access Lesson
Plans, Class
Activities, and
More

Schools across Canada are observing Anti-Bullying Day on December 17th, standing against bullying and showing their support for those who are or who have been impacted.

Bullying comes in many different forms; including physical, verbal, social, or cyber. Cyberbullying is especially pervasive as it can occur anywhere and at any time, compounded by the fact that many young people do not receive adequate supervision when using technology.

SFMHS is committed to helping students, educators, and school staff put a stop to bullying at their schools and beyond.

Did you know?

Data from the 2019 Canadian Health Survey on Children and Youth revealed:

- **71%** of Canadian youth (ages 12-17) said they had been bullied in the past year.
- **42%** of bullied youth reported that incidences occurred every month or more often.

- **72%** of youth who were bullied often reported that their lives were stressful.
- **70%** of youth who were regularly bullied experienced headaches, **73%** were having sleep difficulties, and **60%** experienced stomach aches; which are physical stress responses.

Source: [Statistics Canada](#)

Get ready to raise awareness at your school on Anti-Bullying Day! Our [Student Mental Health Toolkit](#) offers a range of bullying prevention resources to help educators, school staff, and students address this critical and ongoing issue. Visit the Toolkit for activities that teach students how to take a stand against bullying and promote kindness.

Suggested Resources

Cross-Curricular Lesson Plans:

- [Bullying in High School: The Long-Term Effects](#)
 - Grades: 8-12
 - Curriculum Competencies: English Language Arts and Physical Education
- [Speaking Up for Ourselves and Others: The Hero's Journey](#)
 - Grades: 4-7
 - Curriculum Competencies: English Language & Health Education
- **Class Activity:** [Anti-Bullying Quiz](#)
- **Downloadable Resources:** [How to Be an Upstander: What to Do When You Witness Bullying](#)

Register for full access to the Student Mental Health Toolkit at no cost to view our full library of resources on bullying, mental health, and anti-stigma education.

[Register Now](#)

Thank You

We are incredibly thankful for the ongoing support from our community. Your involvement helps us provide impactful programs to those who need them most. Whether you are booking a presentation, starting a Stigma-Free Club at your school, or sharing our resources, you are helping us create a brighter, stigma-free future for all.

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



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