



TRANSITIONS

CANADA'S ORIGINAL EVIDENCE-BASED CAMPUS RESOURCE:
IMPROVES MENTAL HEALTH KNOWLEDGE,
DECREASES STIGMA, ENHANCES HELP-SEEKING.

BACKGROUND

With about three quarters of mental disorders able to be diagnosed before age 25, the transition period from high school to college or university is a pivotal time to enhance mental health literacy for young people. Improved mental health literacy is associated with understanding how to obtain and maintain good mental health, understanding mental disorders and their treatments, decreased stigma, and enhanced help-seeking behaviours for mental health concerns. Negative consequences of unrecognized and untreated mental disorders include, but are not limited to, higher risk for numerous physical illnesses and substance abuse, poorer academic/work achievement, problems in interpersonal relationships and social functioning, and early mortality. Although interest in addressing mental health needs in post-secondary educational institutions is increasing, on-campus enhancement of mental health literacy has been hampered by lack of evidence-based resources.

DEVELOPING TRANSITIONS

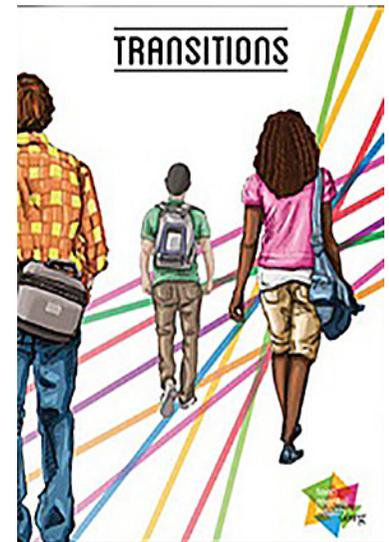
Transitions (2nd edition) was developed to address the challenges above. It is a comprehensive life-skills resource available in multiple formats with embedded mental health information, specifically designed to address the needs of incoming college/ university students. The resource was developed with input from post-secondary students, campus student services providers, and mental health professionals. The included domains are consistent with those identified by post-secondary students in an independent national survey as important and necessary information that should be easily available on campus.

An initial version of Transitions was published in 2007, with various sections written by community experts in conjunction with TeenMentalHealth.org and reviewed by TMH.org's Youth Advisory Council. In 2012, Transitions was extensively revised to include a more conversational and less directive tone, as well as a harm reduction approach in key areas (e.g. alcohol and drug use). Content in all areas was updated to be consistent with current evidence-based research, and the book was visually re-designed. This resulted in the publication of the second and current version of Transitions, which was released in 2013.

WHAT IS TRANSITIONS?

The goal was to create a resource for first-year post-secondary students that addressed how to successfully navigate the challenges university/college students commonly experience. Transitions is filled with information that students are expected to know, but rarely is explicitly explained to them. This includes information on how to study, how to choose a roommate, and how to budget your student loan. It also branches out into more complex topics like sexuality, contraception, STDs, mental illness, suicide, and addictions. Sensitive topics like contraception, STDs, and substance use are discussed from a harm-reduction approach. Instead of telling students what to do or what not to do (which can have the opposite effect than intended), students are provided with accurate information about the topic, so that they are able to make an informed decision for themselves. Additionally, Transitions includes tools and strategies for studying, coping, and much more. It also provides recommendations for when and where students should go for help if they are concerned about their mental health.

There are different formats for Transitions, including: printed book, printed booklet (pocket version), eBook (in the Apple iBook store), iPhone app (free in the Apple App Store), and as an online PDF (free on teenmentalhealth.org).





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METHODOLOGY

- A survey was conducted among first-year university students at Dalhousie University, in Nova Scotia, Canada.
- Transitions was promoted on campus through faculty members, health clinics, the student services office, and the student counselling office two weeks prior to the survey.
- An online and a paper version of the survey were created using a 5-point Likert scale. The survey was developed by the authors, is anonymous, and is identical in both formats.
- The survey consists of 21 questions, including five questions pertaining to respondents' demographics, whether or not they had read the resource, whether or not they had already completed the online survey, and 12 questions pertaining to their opinions of three aspects of the resource: mental health knowledge, attitudes towards mental illness, and help-seeking efficacy.

Transitions has generated significant interest in its many available formats (as of October 2015):

- Printed Book (online version)
 - 10,959 reads
 - 57,926 impressions
- Printed Booklet (online version)
 - 700 reads
 - 7,532 impressions
- Apple eBook
 - 49 downloads
- iPhone App
 - 1,714 downloads

RESEARCH

Statement	Positive	Neutral	Negative
General Considerations			
Overall, I find Transitions (2 nd edition) helpful	87.8%	11.0%	1.2%
Overall, I feel more prepared for college or university after reading Transitions (2 nd edition)	64.6%	30.5%	2.4%
I would recommend Transitions (2 nd edition) to someone I know	89.1%	8.5%	1.2%
Impact on Knowledge			
As a result of reading Transitions (2 nd edition), my knowledge about mental health and mental illness improved	72.0%	28.8%	1.2%
Impact on Attitudes			
As a result of reading Transitions (2 nd edition), I am comfortable having someone with mental illness in my class	84.2%	12.2%	3.8%
As a result of reading Transitions (2 nd edition), I understand most people with mental illness can live a productive life	85.4%	12.2%	2.4%
Impact on Help-seeking Efficacy			
As a result of reading Transitions (2 nd edition), my knowledge about treatment of mental illness has improved	74.4%	24.4%	1.2%
As a result of reading Transitions (2 nd edition), I would suggest someone I know get help for a mental health concern	85.3%	11.0%	3.8%
After reading Transitions (2 nd edition), I would feel more comfortable seeking help for a mental health concern if I need to	83.0%	14.8%	2.4%



HOW TO ACCESS

- To access the Printed Book and Printed Booklet online, or to download the Apple eBook and iPhone App, visit: <http://teenmentalhealth.org/toolbox/transitions/>