

MENTAL FITNESS

WHAT IS MENTAL FITNESS?

MENTAL FITNESS is defined as a state of psychological well-being. It means having a positive sense of how we feel, think and act, which improves our ability to enjoy life.

Our mental fitness is improved when our needs for **competence**, **autonomy** and **relatedness** are met. When these needs are met, we are more likely to make healthy lifestyle choices that we can sustain over time.

These three basic psychological needs form one of the guiding principles of New Brunswick's Wellness Strategy. Creating environments that are supportive of these needs supports wellness for all individuals in all environments.

COMPETENCE

I have abilities, strengths and gifts that are recognized by myself and others. When I use them to meet goals and help others, I feel a sense of accomplishment and worth.

AUTONOMY

I have a voice and I am able to make decisions about things that are important to me and others. Others support me in my choices.

RELATEDNESS

I feel that I belong and have meaningful and caring relationships that support and encourage me. I also support and encourage others in spirit and action.

New Brunswick's
Wellness Strategy 2014-2021
www.gnb.ca/wellness

WHAT CAN WE DO TO HELP OTHERS IMPROVE THEIR MENTAL FITNESS?

- Ask others for help in solving problems; give them a voice in decision making
- Provide support
- Encourage expression of thoughts and feelings
- Show empathy
- Consider others' interests and preferences
- Give choices
- Be inclusive; get to know the people around you
- Teach new skills to others



MENTAL FITNESS

HOW DO YOU BUILD MENTAL FITNESS INTO A PROGRAM OR ACTIVITY?

A mental fitness approach can be used in your programs and activities as a guiding principle, like in New Brunswick's Wellness Strategy. It can be applied in the planning, development and delivery of your program or activity and will enhance participant engagement and increase the quality and success of your initiative.

CONSIDER THE FOLLOWING SUGGESTIONS:

PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT

During the planning and development of the program or activity you can...

- Ask the following questions:
 - Does the program recognize the skills and strengths of participants? (C)
 - Does the program offer choice and a voice to participants? (A)
 - Does the program encourage positive relationships? (R)
- Consider the needs of the target audience (R)
- Demonstrate respect, acceptance and interest in the input of others (C,A,R)
- Invite the community and participants to share their skills and talents to strengthen and sustain the initiative (C)

PROGRAM/ACTIVITY DELIVERY

During the program or activity, the facilitator can...

- Plan activities with participants (C,A,R)
- Promote the development of new skills and knowledge and encourage the participants to practice and apply those skills outside the program (C)
- Provide opportunities for input or feedback (A)
- Consider the interests of the participants (A,R)
- Promote the success of the participants (C,R)
- Offer choices and the opportunity to make decisions (A)
- Acknowledge and celebrate skills and strengths (C,R)
- Encourage respect, inclusiveness and acceptance (R)

Three fundamental needs of mental fitness

C = Competence

A = Autonomy

R = Relatedness

