

Dear Teachers,

Welcome to *More for the Mind*, a unique way to make history come alive for your students. The lessons in *More for the Mind* deal with the history of mental health, a topic that is often missed in our classrooms. It's a great chance for you to provide accurate, thoughtful information and improve your students' research skills through the use of the many primary and secondary resources this website offers.

The topics covered offer your students an opportunity to increase their understanding and empathy towards psychiatric survivors, while helping learners develop critical thinking and research skills. However, it is also a subject that might cause some students anxiety. This apprehension might develop because someone in their lives has experienced the mental health system or because it is not a topic that is spoken about in their culture or home. Reassure students that they will not be asked to share any personal information to alleviate these concerns. Be prepared to refer students to the appropriate people in the community (for example a counsellor, doctor or school nurse) if they express a need for help.

Before starting the unit, discover the resources available for your students, both in the school and the community. Depending on your school's policies, you may want to discuss the unit with your principal or send home a letter to parents and guardians. At the start of the unit, set guidelines to make your classroom a safe place for discussion. It is also important that students use respectful language, so talk about the proper use of words like 'hyper' and 'depressed.' Two great resources to start your unit can be found on YouTube. One is "Self Labelling and Identity" <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pxbw7dDMX60>, which discusses reclaiming labels and helps the viewer find sensitive language to discuss the topics in the lessons. The second video is "Introducing Mad People's History." <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AKBFYi6A6pA&feature=channel>, which talks about the difference between Mad People's history and the history of psychiatry. Both these videos can be used either as a teacher's resource or, if time allows, an introduction to the topics.

We understand that teachers are busy people, and we have tried to make these lessons as easy to use as possible. Each topic comes with several lessons that include links to all the research resources that students and teachers will need. There is also a section to provide teachers with the background information you'll need to effectively teach these lessons. We include ideas for reaching all students, rubrics for assessment and ways to extend the learning with other activities. We would appreciate your feedback to help direct our future efforts.

Sincerely,

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