

Choosing one-time events to support a comprehensive approach

There is no simple solution for building safe and caring learning environments that support healthy relationships, prevent bullying behaviour and promote positive mental health. No single event, resource, activity or program can do this. It takes an intentional, well-planned, long-term comprehensive approach to support transformative changes necessary for creating and sustaining more responsive learning environments.

As part of a comprehensive approach, schools may sometimes choose to organize one-time events or activities (such as outside speakers, a contest, or a special day) that have the potential to motivate and engage students and staff and raise awareness of important topics such as positive mental health or cultural diversity.

When considering a one-time event or activity, use the following criteria to guide your decision making.

- Has clear goals that align with the overall goals of the school's comprehensive approach
- Student activities are relevant to the goals, and promote understanding and skill development
- Is inclusive of and accessible to all students (all students can participate and benefit)
- Honours students' different ways of learning and knowing
- Safeguards the privacy of students and their families
- Is sensitive to cultural and ethnic differences
- Contributes to a shared understanding of important issues and concepts
- Uses positive and respectful language
- Does not promote negative stereotyping of particular groups or individuals
- Focuses on solutions (rather than blame, shame or fear)
- Teaches and reinforces specific skills and strategies
- Offers authentic ways for school staff to follow up to reinforce and build on new learning
- Gathers feedback to determine if goals were met and the school community benefitted from event or activity.

Completing this checklist requires access to detailed information and instructional materials that will be used for the event or activity. The checklist can also be used to plan in-school events—school staff can consider how the activity or event could potentially address each of the criteria and then use this information to guide planning.

The checklist can also be useful as a starting point for discussion if you are considering an event or an activity facilitated by an individual or group from outside the school community. Consider using this criteria to set clear expectations of how an event will be organized, what content will be used with students, and what evidence of results will be gathered.