



Mindcheck.ca

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Ever wonder if you feel and experience things in the same way as everyone else?

That is the idea behind an online resource for youth and young adults... and anyone else interested in understanding their moods and feelings.

We all face times when problems seem to dominate and the way through may not be so clear. The stress, anxiety and sadness can feel overwhelming and make it difficult to do every day things such as go to school, sleep properly (or stay awake) or hang out with friends. Fortunately, most of the time we cope with these situations and the negative feelings go away. Sometimes it's not that simple, though.

Mental health and substance use disorders are the primary health issues experienced by young people up to their early 20s; one in five youth in BC will experience a mental health or substance use disorder serious enough to cause significant distress and impair their ability to function at home, at school or work and with their peers.

Youth and young adults facing these kinds of challenges don't always have the tools or life experience to work out solutions on their own. The consequences can be devastating. Among youth in Canada, suicide is the second leading cause of death and rates have trebled since 1970. Males are four times more likely to complete suicide versus females, but females account for 75 percent of attempts. Young people also find other ways to deal with their problems including using alcohol and substances and engaging in dangerous behaviours.

A new online resource, mindcheck.ca, was launched in January 2012 that addresses some of the need for information and support.

The opening message at mindcheck is a very effective in explaining itself: "Welcome to mindcheck, where a person can find out why they feel as they do, and get ideas of what to do about it."

And that's what it does. Mindcheck is set up in three key topic areas. The Mood & Stress section deals with anxiety and depression; Substance Use covers alcohol, street drugs, prescription and other medications. And Reality Check talks about psychosis, or when your brain is not working properly.

All three sections of the website offer excellent information presented in very clear, accessible language. There are quizzes with evaluations and suggestions, fact sheets, self-help tools and links to other online resources. The information is suitable for families and friends, and professionals who work with young adults.

It can be hard to take a step back and look at what's going on in your life. Sometimes it's hard even to know what questions are to ask. Mindcheck provides education and tools to help you better understand what's going on.

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