



TALK  TODAY

Promoting athlete mental health



**Canadian Mental
Health Association**
Ontario

Purpose



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- Introduce Canadian Mental Health Association's (CMHA) Talk Today Program
- Show how Talk Today is being implemented on two campuses
- Lessons Learned
- Qs and As about implementation



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Program inception



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- Collaboration between CMHA Ontario and the Ontario Hockey League in 2014.
- Create a safe environment for players / anyone linked to the team
- Fight stigma and discrimination; reach a tough demographic
- Ontario Hockey League partnership led to broader relationship across the Western Hockey League and Quebec Major Junior Hockey League
- Began working with Colleges and Universities two years ago

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Talk Today snapshot



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- Mental health promotion and suicide prevention program available nationwide
- 44 CMHAs, 10 community partners serve 100+ sports teams
- Reaches elementary students to elite/competitive athletes into their early 20s



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Why Talk Today?



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Student athletes face immense pressures :

- Academic demands
- Pressure to perform in their chosen sport
- Managing finances
- Staying connected to family and friends
- Adapting to new environment
- Many struggle to get help because of the stigma surrounding mental illness in sports

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How Talk Today can help



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1. CMHA Mental Health Coaches
2. Talk Today Workshops
3. Club Mental Health Champions
4. Talk Today Game Days



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Element 1: CMHA Mental Health Coaches

- CMHA branch mental health expert connected to each team
- Athletes can turn to CMHA Mental Health Coach if they or a teammate needs support
- Mental Health Coaches can help navigate mental health and addictions system; point to crisis services if needed
- CMHA Mental Health Coach can also help direct athletes to campus resources
- Provides suicide prevention workshop to the teams

Element 2: Workshops



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- safeTALK (Suicide Alertness For Everyone); accredited; by Living Works
- Focus on suicide and suicide prevention; suicide safer community
- Mandatory for players, recommended for coaches, training staff, parents, teachers, etc.



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Element 2: Workshops



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- Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training (ASIST); accredited; by Living Works
- Recommend 1-2 adults (e.g. billets, training staff, teachers take ASIST; also open to anyone associated with the team)
- Participants learn to intervene and help prevent the immediate risk of suicide and keep that person safe

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Element 2: Workshop results



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- More than 3,400 participants trained in safeTALK
- Over 2,800 players, 200 coaches, 300 billets / parents and 100 front-office staff



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Element 3: Club Mental Health Champions

- Main contact for CMHA Mental Health Coach to help with scheduling/logistics
- Someone players are comfortable approaching if they need support (e.g. trainer, athletic therapist, etc.)
- Encouraged to take workshops with players



Element 4: Talk Today game days



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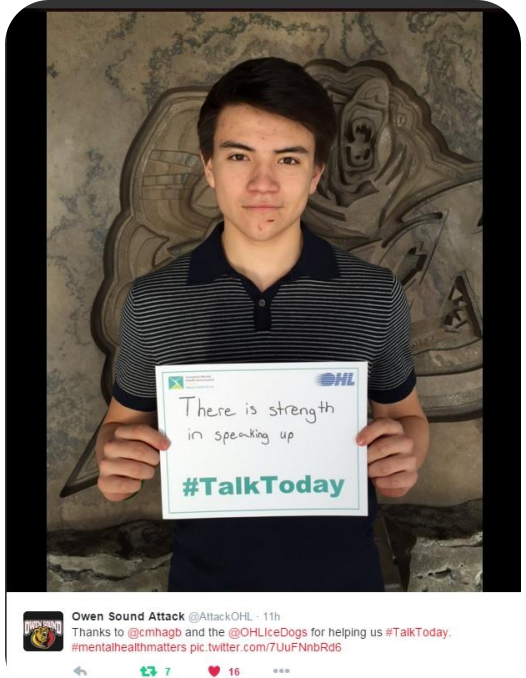
- One-home game a year dedicated to positive mental health
- Tables for CMHA Branches / partners to promote local services
- Pre-game ceremonies
- Media opportunities



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Element 4: Talk Today game days

- Public address announcements
- Talk Today placards for social media
- Fundraising possibilities



Owen Sound Attack @AttackOHL · 11h
Thanks to @cmhagb and the @OHLiceDogs for helping us #TalkToday.
#mentalhealthmatters pic.twitter.com/7UuFNbRds

Element 4: Talk Today game days



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- The Canadian Hockey League, for example, clusters all Talk Today games in February
- #TalkToday
- Substantial reach → More than 6.8 million people on Twitter; more than 21 million impressions in 2017 alone



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How does Talk Today work on campus?



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Sault College



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- Sault College is a leader in supporting the Mental Health of their students!
- They fully encouraged and supported bringing Talk Today to Campus!
- They became the first post secondary institution in Canada to Adopt Talk Today.



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Sault College Game Days



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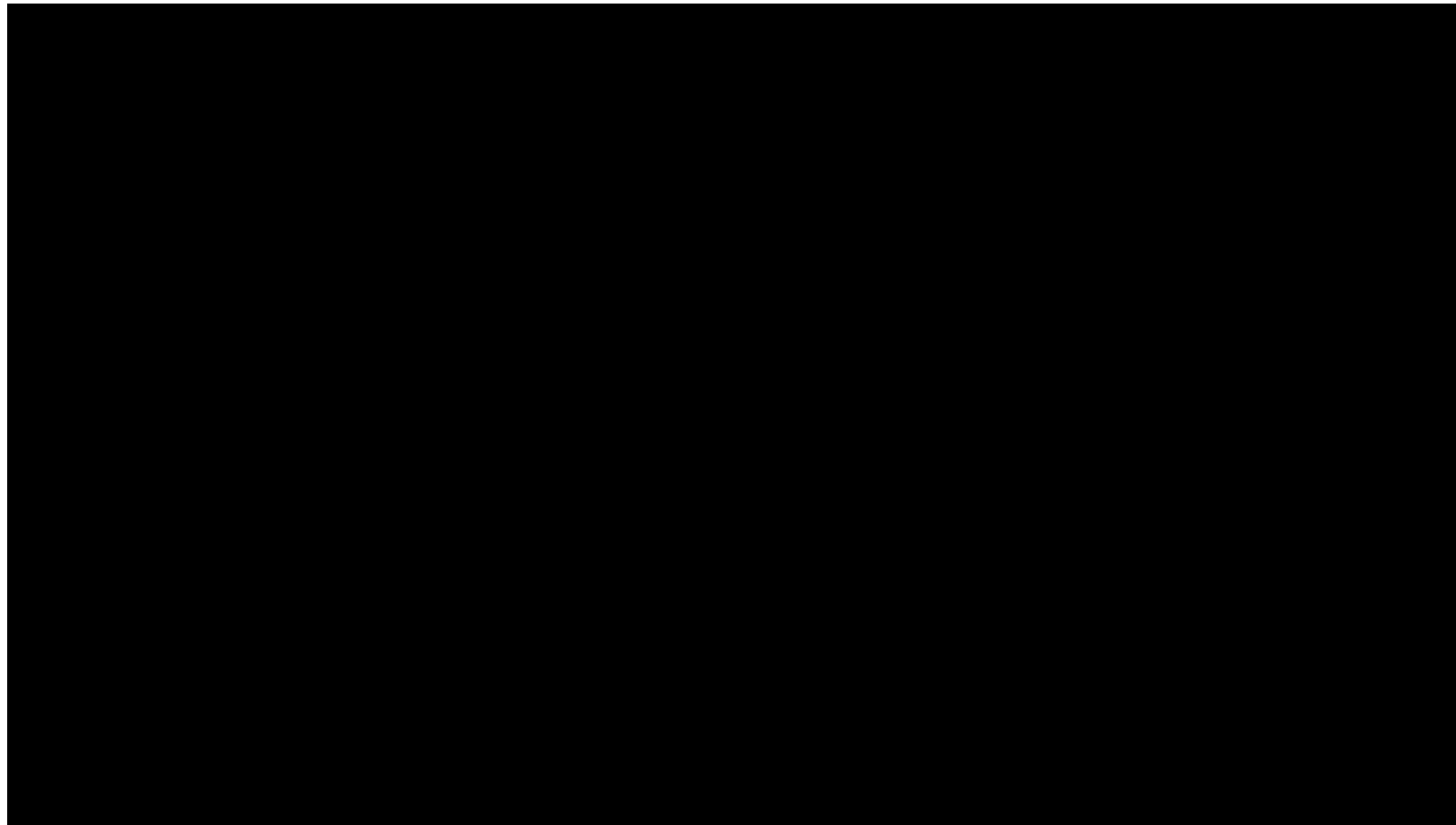
- Involving the Campus and Community helps to spread the message about Mental Health and Talk Today.
- Sault College Cougars women's and men's basketball teams have hosted back-to-back awareness game days
- Players wore Talk Today branded shirts with positive mental health messaging on the back during warm-up. CMHA Sault Ste. Marie and Sault College Mental Health hub handed out miniature basketballs to fans in attendance.

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Sault College Game Days



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<https://www.facebook.com/CMHASSM/videos/935595273238443/>

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Algoma University



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- First university campus to join the Talk Today Program
- Great support from the athletics department and teams for promoting mental health
- Over 100 athletes and coaches from all nine varsity teams trained in the first season



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What are some challenges to overcome?



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Challenge: workshop time commitments

- Prospective partners say time commitment is too much

Solution

- We provide workshops when it's convenient for teams
- We work with team contacts to start scheduling early to avoid any practice or game conflicts
- Most teams at elite levels have “off” days

Challenge: Lack of safeTALK trainers

- Lack of safeTALK trainers to serve teams or campus already has their own safeTALK trainer.

Solution

- Sector partners / freelancers showing interest; can fill gaps
- CMHA branches can leverage relationships to find trainers from other agencies
- If you already have a trainer on campus you are more than welcome to use them.

Challenge: Full implementation



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- Some partners say they can't implement all program components

Solution

- Some campuses have a lot of teams that they work with and implementing with all teams at once can be a challenge.
- We suggest implementing Talk Today with one team as a pilot project or phasing the program in with the athletics department.
- We also try to space out the components (e.g. workshops early in the season, game days later in the season)

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Challenge: Supports available on Campus

- “Our campus already offers support to students struggling with their mental health.”

Solution

- Our goal is to promote mental health, whether it is promoting the services on campus or the services available in the community
- We are happy to work with and integrate campus staff into the program

Lessons Learned



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Lessons Learned

- It works because we're linking mental health to something participants love: sports
- Many CMHA branches are eager to expand Talk Today
- Athletes want to be mental health champions
- They want to work with our branches on educational or fundraising initiatives

MAY 9, 2018

Storm's Garrett McFadden Named OHL Humanitarian of the Year

DAN SNYDER HUMANITARIAN AWARD | GARRETT MCFADDEN



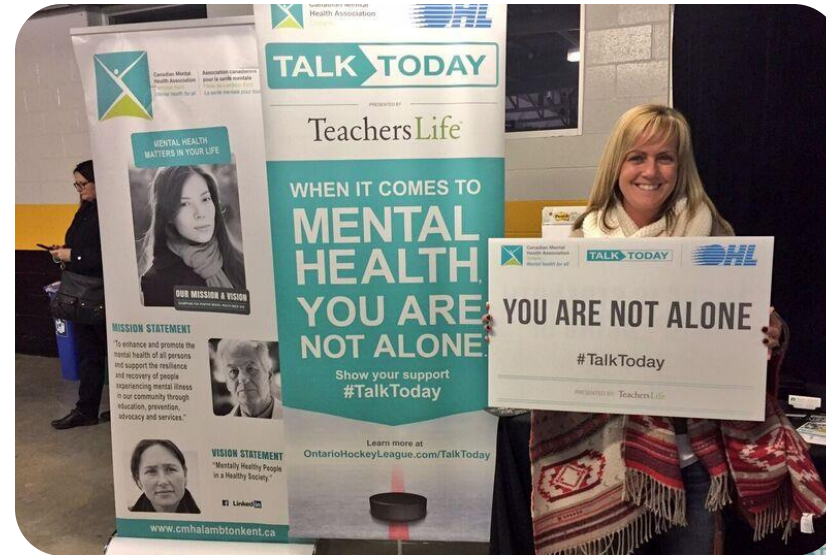
Ontario Hockey League



Toronto, ON – The Ontario Hockey League today announced that defenceman Garrett McFadden of the Guelph Storm is the 2017-18 recipient of the Dan Snyder Memorial Trophy awarded annually to the OHL's Humanitarian of the Year.

Implementing Talk Today on Campus

- 30 Canadian Mental Health Association branches across Ontario
- In every college community
- Excited to collaborate; outreach opportunity



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Implementing Talk Today

CMHA Ontario provides support:

- Talk Today program manuals
- Talk Today game-day guides
- Other workshop materials



Introduction	P2
Why Talk Today?	P2
1. Mental Health Suicide Prevention Workshops	P2
2. CMHA Mental Health Coaches	P5
3. Mental Health Champions	P6
4. Talk Today Awareness Games	P7
5. Evaluation	P9
Summary	P9



Introduction	P.2
Game-Day Elements	P.2
1. Branding	P.2
2. CMHA Branch Kiosks/Tables	P.3
3. Video Announcements on Scoreboard Screens	P.4
4. Public Address/Video Board Announcements	P.5
5. Talk Today Placards	P.6
6. Ceremonial Puck Drop	P.7
7. Other Elements	P.7
Communications Elements	P.8
1. Talk Today Website Banner	P.8
2. Social Media Plan and Sample Tweets/Posts	P.9
3. News Release Template	P.12
4. CMHA Branch Key Messages	P.13
Summary	P.16



Bring Talk Today to your Campus

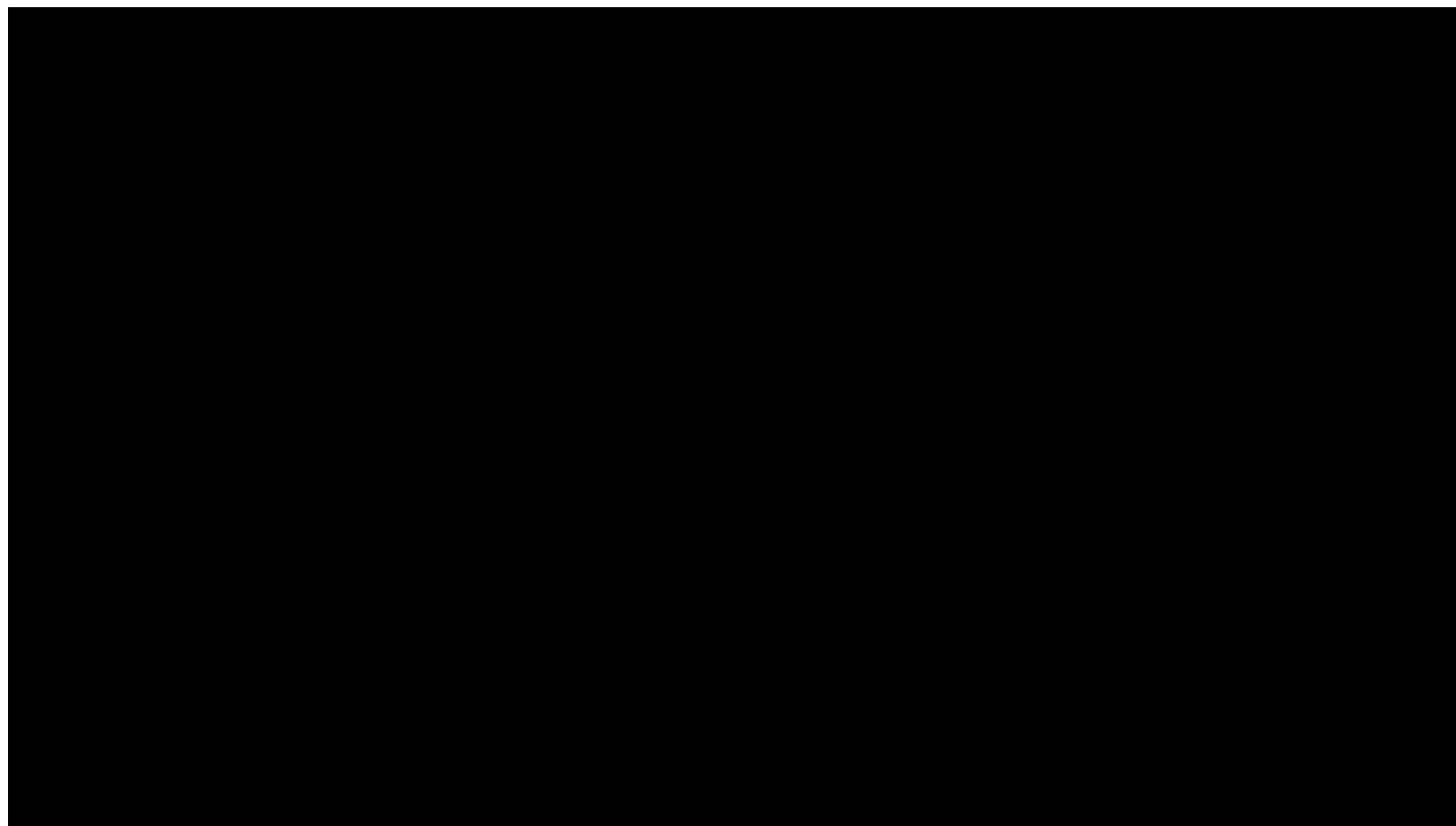


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Summary:

- Implementation experience
- Enhance brand and leadership in your community
- Connect college and University students with mental health supports
- Provide young athletes tools for life (more than 3,400 people trained in safeTALK since 2014)

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<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PmlH8n1Fjms&feature=youtu.be>

Thoughts / Questions / Comments?



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Connect with us



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