

# Mental Fitness

**Mental fitness** refers to our personal sense of psychological wellness (positive thoughts and feelings). We are more likely to improve our mental fitness when our needs for recognition (competence), choices (autonomy), and belonging (relatedness) are met. It means having a positive sense of how we feel, think and act which improves our ability to enjoy life. It also implies the ability to efficiently respond to life's challenges, and to effectively restore and sustain a state of balance.

## Mental Fitness Needs

Mental fitness is fostered in environments and relationships that satisfy three interrelated needs: competence, autonomy and relatedness.

**Competence:** "I have strengths and gifts that are recognized by myself and others." We need to recognize and use our personal strengths and gifts to meet goals and to help others. Fulfillment of this need provides us with a sense of accomplishment and worth.

**Autonomy:** "I am able to make choices about things that are important to me." We need personal freedom to make choices or decisions that are important to us and have others support our choices. When this need is satisfied in conjunction with other need areas, freedom and choice are expressed in ways in which respect is demonstrated for self and others.

**Relatedness:** "I feel included, supported and encouraged by others." We need to feel we belong, and are connected to important relationships that support and encourage us in spirit and action. This need is met through interaction with others, our membership in groups, and the support and encouragement we receive from others.

## School Connectedness

A sense of school connectedness can support students in making healthy choices. Students who are attached to their school, and who consider their teachers to be supportive, are less likely to engage in unhealthy or high-risk behaviours.

New Brunswick Health Council, (2012-2013). Mental Fitness: New Brunswick Student Wellness Survey Grades 6 to 12.

Related Resources:

[www.jcshpositivementalhealthtoolkit.com](http://www.jcshpositivementalhealthtoolkit.com)

[http://www2.gnb.ca/content/gnb/en/departments/social\\_development/wellness/content/healthy\\_living/mental\\_fitness.html](http://www2.gnb.ca/content/gnb/en/departments/social_development/wellness/content/healthy_living/mental_fitness.html)