

Within, Between & Around Us

2023 Children's Mental Health Awareness Week and Beyond Toolkit



Dear Families,

As we move through the school year's remaining months, we pause to acknowledge the many realities that impact our day-to-day experiences and mental health. We acknowledge that many feel a sense of being stretched thin and tired, among other feelings. These realities, thoughts and feelings are valid and important. As such, this resource has been carefully created in hopes of not adding to, but complementing the routines and at-home wellness practices. We collaborated with York Region Public Health, Healthy Schools, and Staff Wellness to create a resource that we hope will create opportunities for joy and wellness.

At the YRDSB, we recently launched the [Student Mental Health and Addictions Strategy](#). It highlights a holistic approach to Mental Health encompassing many factors, including but not limited to mental and physical health. [How we think and feel about ourselves and the world can directly impact our physical and mental health](#). To care for ourselves, our children and our families, we must center and incorporate wellness and health practices that speak to who we are and our identity. There are many ways to be healthy and promote mental health. This calendar aims to provide resources and opportunities that support positive mental health through **small and intentional actions**.



This toolkit includes

- 1) [Community workshops and resources](#)
- 2) Five themes supported by various resources that support health/mental health and well-being while promoting **Within, Between & Around Us** and **small** and **intentional** actions that support positive mental health.
- 3) We invite you to consider how to use these resources to best support you and your family.

Helpful considerations include:

- We recognize how busy things may be, and sometimes it may be difficult to find the time to engage in some of the offerings listed in this toolkit. We encourage you to consider how this resource may fit into your day-to-day routines or help create new ones
- These opportunities are structured to allow you/your family to tailor the experience (use what fits best for you). Make this calendar and the accompanying resources your own. Use what works on the days that best fit. For example, if a resource for Wednesday better suits Monday, then use it on Monday.

Children's Mental Health Awareness Week 2023!

Within, Between & Around Us

We encourage you to use the hashtags below to share how your family is acknowledging Children's Mental Health Awareness Week or using the toolkit

#WBA

#withinbetweenaround

#YRDSB #CMHAW2023

#MHYRDSB

Share with us on Twitter

@MH_YRDSB



A few tips to support caregiver wellness!
From the [Take Care of Yourself](#) resource

Take Care of Yourself



Within, Between & Around Us

Toolkit

Included are five themes supported by ready-to-use activities that can be practiced at home and in other environments. These activities promote positive mental health through **small** and **intentional** actions. Each theme and accompanying resource can be tailored to fit the needs of you and your circle of care or family.

Themes:

- [Mindful Mondays](#)
- [Thoughtful Tuesdays](#)
- [Wellness Wednesdays](#)
- [Take Care Thursdays](#)
- [Focus Friday](#)



Mindful Mondays!

Mindful Mondays!



The following [image](#) can provide a great conversation starter when speaking to your child(ren)

During Mindful Mondays; we invite you to do **One Small Thing** – Practice being mindful or in the moment. Slow things down by pausing, reflecting and being present in the moment.

[Combining sensory processes with mindfulness](#) can be especially beneficial for children and youth with unique gifts, abilities and needs.

Try and explore!

Get mindful about feelings using these [Feelings Flashcards](#)

Don't have a printer at home? Double the fun by creating your own flashcards. Use old newspapers, flyers, magazines or pictures to make your own flashcards.

[Ukulele relaxation](#)



Being mindful can look, feel and sound different for each of us.

Tell us how you practice mindfulness!

You can find us on Twitter
@MH_YRDSB

Use the following hashtags on Twitter!

#MHYRDSB #WBA
#withinbetweenaround
#YRDSB #CMHAW2023

Thoughtful Tuesdays!

Thoughtful Tuesday!



The following image can provide a great conversation starter when speaking to your child(ren) about the power of their thoughts.

Thoughtful Tuesdays invite us to focus on the power of our thoughts. Our thoughts, feelings, and actions are all connected. Understanding this connection is an essential part of developing effective coping skills.

[Awareness of our breath](#) can soothe the nervous system, relieve anxiety, release tension and improve overall health and well-being. This skill can be especially beneficial to children with unique gifts, abilities and needs. We can promote breath awareness to slow things down to be more thoughtful.

Try and explore!

Engage in small and thoughtful actions:

- **Acknowledge** feelings and experiences
- **Smile:** A simple smile can make a difference in someone's day and yours
- **Share** thoughtful notes/ texts
- **Give** your full attention

Explore this [Youth-focused mental health resource hub](#) to learn more about the connection between thoughts, feelings and actions

Being thoughtful can look, feel and sound different for each of us.

Tell us how you practice being thoughtful!

You can find us on Twitter
@MH_YRDSB

Use the following hashtags on Twitter!

#MHYRDSB #WBA
#withinbetweenaround
#YRDSB #CMHAW2023

Check out this [Feather Breathing](#) exercise!



Wellness Wednesdays!

<p>Wellness Wednesday!</p> <p>CHAIR EXERCISES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Put your hands behind your back, touching your elbows with your hands. Hold your hands up in front of you (hold for 5 seconds), make fists, turn fists upwards (hold for 5 seconds), turn fists downwards (hold for 5). Bring your hands back down. Repeat 5 times. With your feet flat on the floor, raise your heels for 10 seconds, drop them back down. Repeat 3 times. Put your hands flat on the back of your head and bend your elbows. Turn your head left (hold for 5 seconds), turn your head to middle, turn your head to the right (hold for 5 seconds). Leg extension: straighten right leg in front, bring down. Straighten your left leg in front, bring back down.  <p>  School Mental Health Ontario  Santé mentale en milieu scolaire Ontario  Find our voice! jack.org/covid </p> <p><i>The following image can provide a great conversation starter to encourage wellness movement and breaks.</i></p>	<p>Wellness Wednesdays invite us to consider what helps us feel and do well. Wellness looks different for each of us. Our wellness can be connected to who we are and the things we enjoy. It can also be connected to our experiences, culture, beliefs and many other pieces that shape our identity.</p> <p>Engaging in activities that connect mind and body is a great way to enhance the wellness of ALL children and youth</p>	<p>Try and explore!</p> <p>This activity can help build a regular practice that benefits you and your family. The activity promotes focusing their attention, calming feelings of anxiety, and managing stress. Stretch in a way that feels comfortable to you. Let go and stretch</p> <p>Practice and model this activity with your child(ren). Body scan</p> 	<p>What is One Small Thing that helps you feel well? Tell us how you enhance or maintain your wellness?</p> <p>Are there actions that you can take to help those around you improve their wellness?</p> <p>Share with us!</p> <p>You can find us on Twitter @MH_YRDSB</p> <p>Use the following hashtags on Twitter!</p> <p>#MHYRDSB #WBA #withinbetweenaround #YRDSB #CMHAW2023</p>
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Take Care Thursdays!

Take Care Thursday!

Adapt Your Self-Care Routines.

Some of your self-care strategies might be disrupted for a while (e.g. your gym or fave restaurant may close). Consider what you can do differently and take this as a chance to try something new.

jack.org

The following [image](#) can provide a great conversation starter to support your child(ren) in exploring and sharing their personal self-care strategies

Take Care Thursdays invites us to consider how we take care of ourselves and those around us. Taking moments each day to practice self-care and collective care with those around us is important.

Equipping ourselves and our child(ren) with the tools needed to Take Care and enhance positive mental health can be a great way to promote overall wellness.

Try and explore!

We invite you to explore [Self Care 101](#) with your child(ren) during Take Care Thursdays and beyond.

Visit [Kinark Autism Services](#) for fun and educational videos that support taking care

Visit [School Mental Health Ontario](#) to learn and explore resources that support parents and caregivers in improving children and youth mental health.



What is One Small Thing that helps you care for yourself and those around you?

Share with us on social media!

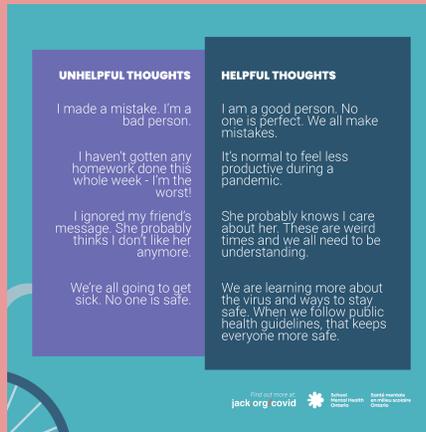
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Twitter!

#MHYRDSB #WBA
#withinbetweenaround
#YRDSB #CMHAW2023

Focus Fridays!

Focus Friday!



See below for enlargement
The following [image](#) can provide a great conversation starter to support students in exploring how they might change unhelpful thoughts.

Focus Fridays invites us to pause and reflect. Considering situations in an intentional way can offer insight and clarity.

Consider the following reflection questions to share with your child(ren).

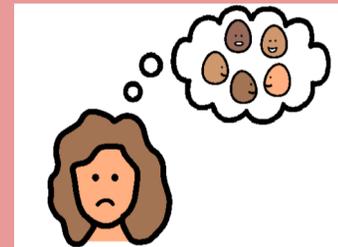
- 1) What went well today/this week? (Small things matter, even things that may seem insignificant)
- 2) Did you have any challenging or difficult moments? How did you deal with these moments?

Try and explore!

Taking time to pause and reflect can help develop an awareness of our physical and mental states.

[Pause and reflect](#)

Use [social stories](#), pictures and other forms of expression to support reflection in children and youth with unique gifts, abilities and needs. down to be more thoughtful.



What is One Small Thing that helps you focus, pause, and reflect?

Share with us on social media!

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@MH_YRDSB

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#MHYRDSB #WBA
#withinbetweenaround
#YRDSB #CMHAW2023

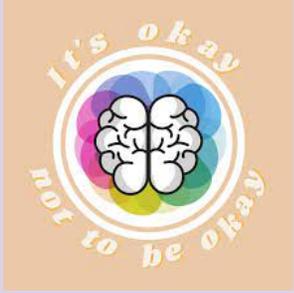
May 2023

#Within, Between & Around Us: Children’s Mental Health Awareness Week and Beyond Calendar

CMHAW Workshops: [For more information and additional opportunities!](#)

<p style="text-align: center;">Mindful Monday <i>Mindful Mondays invite us to slow things down by pausing, reflecting and being present in the moment.</i></p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Thoughtful Tuesday <i>Thoughtful Tuesdays invite us to focus on our thoughts and their connections to our feelings, and actions</i></p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Wellness Wednesday <i>Wellness Wednesdays invite us to consider what helps us feel and do well.</i></p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Take Care Thursday <i>Take Care Thursdays invites us to consider how we take care of ourselves and those around us.</i></p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Focus Friday <i>Focus Friday invites us to pause, reflect and consider situations in an intentional way</i></p>
1	3	3	4	5
<p style="text-align: center;">Registration</p> <p>Kinark: Panic Attacks Caregivers, 6:00–7:00 pm</p> <p>External Offerings: Mindful Mondays: Shame and Guilt, Webinar for Parents</p> <p>Accessible Yoga from a</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Registration</p> <p>Hope House Hospice: Loss, Grief and Mental Health Caregivers, 6:00–7:00 pm</p> <p>Kinark: Perfectionism Caregivers, 6:00–7:00 pm</p> <p>External Offerings: Evening Parent/Carer - "Toolbox" - Autism :</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Registration</p> <p>Hospice Georgina: Children’s Grief Caregivers, 5:00–6:00 pm</p> <p>External Offerings: Mindfulness with June</p> <p>Becoming Gender Affirming Workshop</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Registration</p> <p>Hong Fook: The impact of gaming Caregivers, 6:30–8:00pm</p> <p>Registration York Hills: Identity and Mental Health Caregivers, 6:30–8:00pm.</p> <p>External Offerings:</p>	<p>External Offerings: Children’s Mental Health Matters: Adverse Childhood Experiences</p> <p>How We Cope: Conversations about Resilience beyond Adversity</p>

<p>Wheelchair or Chair</p> <p>Mindful Mondays Drop-in Meditation Series</p>	<p>Strategies for Coping</p> <p>Yoga Sutra Class</p>	<p>Weekly Wednesday Meditation</p>	<p>Afternoon Parent/Carer - "Toolbox" - Autism : Strategies for Coping</p> <p>Move for Mental Health - Whole Class Activity</p>	
<p style="text-align: right;">8</p> <p>Try this!</p> <p>Mindfulness Tools</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take 5 by Kids Help Phone <p>Mindfulness at home</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Imaginary walk • Guided imagery • Deep breathing • 25 Fun Mindfulness Activities for Children & Teens <p>External Offering:</p> <p>Kinark Autism Services Kid Social – Vegetable Garden Planting Kit: 4:00–5:00pm</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">9</p> <p>Try this!</p> <p>Expressions of gratitude can be a great way to be thoughtful!</p> <p>What am I grateful for?</p> <p>Gratitude Exercise by Jack.Org</p>  <p>PERSONAL GRATITUDE</p> <p>One of my strengths that I am grateful for is <input type="text"/></p> <p>One thing I can do to express gratitude is <input type="text"/></p> <p>One person I am grateful for is <input type="text"/></p> <p>One memory I am grateful for is <input type="text"/></p> <p>One challenge I am grateful for is <input type="text"/></p> <p>One beautiful thing in my life I am grateful for is <input type="text"/></p> <p><small>jack.org covid</small></p>	<p style="text-align: right;">10</p> <p>Try this!</p> <p>Our wellness encompasses many aspects.</p> <p>Try the Wheel of Well-being activity with your class</p>  <p>Kids Help Phone – Breathing Balloon Tip</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">11</p> <p>Try this!</p> <p>Physical activity: The Dice Is Right</p> <p>Tips for Self care</p>  <p>What is One Small Thing your family is doing to take care today?</p> <p>Use #onesmallthing Share with us on twitter @MH_YRDSB</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">12</p> <p>Try This!</p> <p>Sometimes we learn to unlearn</p> <p>External Offering:</p> <p>Kinark Autism Services: The Power for Reinforcement – 12:00–1:30pm</p>

<p style="text-align: right;">15</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Try This!</p> <p>Mindfulness for the classroom</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fill the Cup • Two-minute mindfulness • Mindfulness: The Present Moment-Worksheet • How to Create a Glitter Jar for Kids <p>External Offerings: Kinark Autism Services: Sensory Processing & Regulation - 12:00-1:30pm</p> <p>Kinark Autism Services: Transition to Adulthood - 1:00-2:30pm</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">16</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Try This!</p> <p>Activity: Finding Solutions</p> <p>YOU Matter #takecaretuesday #onesmallthing</p> 	<p style="text-align: right;">17</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Try This!</p> <p>YOUtime, Wetime, OURtime matters #onesmallthing</p>  <p>External Offering: Kinark Autism Services Teen Social: Magic Show 6:00-7:00pm</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">18</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Try This!</p> <p>Activities: Self Care Bingo Balance Bean</p> <p>Resource: Kid's Help Phone's Self-Care Checklist</p> 	<p style="text-align: right;">19</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Try This!</p> <p>Activities: Pause and Colour: Mindful Colouring</p> <p>Plant a seed and watch it grow</p> <p>Its okay to feel not okay</p> 
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Try This!

Mindfulness Tools

- [Kids Help Phone: Meditation and Mindfulness Tip](#)
- [Breathing Balloon](#)
- [Glowing fire body scan](#)



Mindfulness helps you to be where you are when you're there

Tim Ryan

OurMindfulLife.com

23

Try This!

Activity: SMHO
[Organize Your Mind](#)



SPREADING GRATITUDE

With friends and family, **make a commitment** to send each other one message a day to keep yourselves connected.

This can be as simple as **sending a friend** a meme, an encouraging message or a funny video, once every day or two.

Created by Jack.org COVID

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Try This!

Resource Kit: SMHO
[No Problem Too Big or Too Small](#)

Spending time outdoors is a great way to keep well.

Can't go outside today? Set up a world-watching window. Bring the outside in. Find a window view or other view designed to induce feelings of deep relaxation, awe, and vitality—it will take you away from your inward-facing world OR [Watch the Live Ontario FeederWatch Cam](#)

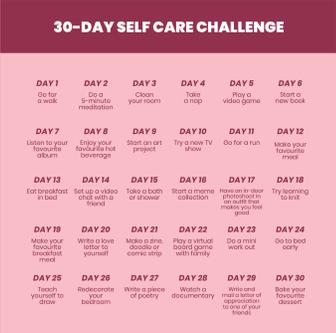
External Offering:
[Kinark Autism Services](#)
[Family Social: Nature Club](#) - 4:00-5:00pm

25

Try This!

Plant a seed and watch it grow. What might growing activities and nature exploration look like at school and at home?

Resource:
[The Wheel of Well-Being](#)



30-DAY SELF CARE CHALLENGE

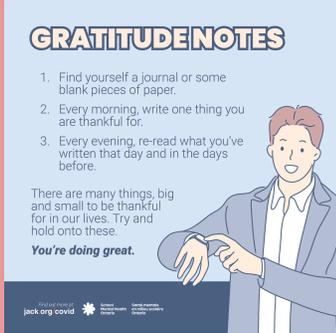
DAY 1 Go for a walk	DAY 2 Do a 5-minute meditation	DAY 3 Clean your room	DAY 4 Take a nap	DAY 5 Play a video game	DAY 6 Start a new book
DAY 7 Listen to your favourite album	DAY 8 Enjoy your favourite hot beverage	DAY 9 Start an art project	DAY 10 Try a new TV show	DAY 11 Go for a run	DAY 12 Make your favourite meal
DAY 13 Get breakfast in bed	DAY 14 Get up a video chat with a friend	DAY 15 Take a bath or shower	DAY 16 Start a movie collection	DAY 17 Have an in-person or virtual coffee with a friend	DAY 18 Try something to knit
DAY 19 Make your favourite breakfast meal	DAY 20 Write a love letter to yourself	DAY 21 Make a game, board game or something else	DAY 22 Play a virtual board game with a friend	DAY 23 Go to a movie	DAY 24 Go to bed early
DAY 25 Teach yourself to draw	DAY 26 Decorate your bedroom	DAY 27 Write a piece of poetry	DAY 28 Watch a documentary	DAY 29 Have a meal made a letter of appreciation to one of your loved ones	DAY 30 Bake your favourite dessert

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Try This!

Activity: [Stretch it Out : Body Movement Exercise](#)

[What's in the Cards?](#)



GRATITUDE NOTES

1. Find yourself a journal or some blank pieces of paper.
2. Every morning, write one thing you are thankful for.
3. Every evening, re-read what you've written that day and in the days before.

There are many things, big and small to be thankful for in our lives. Try and hold onto these.

You're doing great.

Created by Jack.org COVID

<p style="text-align: right;">29</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Try This!</p> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; background-color: #e0f2f1;"> <p style="text-align: center;">A BETTER HEADSPACE!</p> <p><i>We all get caught up in our thoughts. We might fixate on things that we'd rather not. Give yourself a break to get into a better headspace!</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Go for a walk • Take a nap • Play a video game • Read a book • Do your homework </div> <p style="text-align: center;">Games, Worksheets and Activities for Kids</p> <p style="text-align: center;">External Offering: Kinark Autism Services Family Social Dance Party: 4:30–5:30pm</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">30</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Try This!</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Gratitude Mantra #onesmallthing</p> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; background-color: #e0e0e0;"> <p style="text-align: center;">GRATITUDE REMINDERS</p> <p>It's important to remind ourselves to be grateful for the good things in our lives and the good things we bring into the lives of those around us. If you're feeling down and in need of a little boost, look at the list below to see if anything jumps out at you! Try it out – say it out loud. Say it a few more times. Think about how it makes you feel stronger. You got this.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I am capable • I am valuable • I am enough • I am a good person • I deserve love • I deserve compassion • I deserve patience • I am doing the best I can </div> <p style="text-align: center;">External Offering: Kinark Autism Services: Transition to Kindergarten - 12:00–1:30pm</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">31</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Its okay to meet ourselves at where we're at</p> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; background-color: #e0e0e0;"> </div> <p style="text-align: center;">External Offering: Kinark Autism Services: Kids Social – Drawing Fun 4:00–5:00pm Virtually</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Extra Offerings for the month!</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 51 Mindfulness Exercises at home • Easy and Fun Mental Health Activities for Home • 30+ videos & mental health activities for kids • Mental Health Activities for Kids • 5 Restorative Mental Health Activities for Kids • 11 home activities to boost kids 	
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One Small Thing is...Anything that helps you to feel positive and hopeful

Here is some examples of small things shared by students and parents

“ When my daughter shares funny Tik Tok videos with me after work” Parent

“Being brave when I feel nervous” Student

“ Taking homemade lunches to school ” student

“Feeling accepted” student

“My family & friends” student



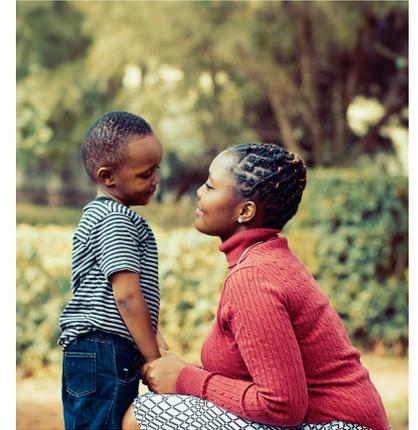
**Many identities, languages and expressions of wellness are missing,
how do you and your family express Within Between and Around
(holistic mental health) ?**

Share with us on social media @MH_YRDSB (Twitter)



Within Between & Around in action through the ABCs of Mental Health,

- Within, Between and Around can include the relationships we have with others that support our mental health. Meaningful relationships and conversations can improve your child's mental health and create a sense of value in knowing that they are heard, listened to and **acknowledged**.
- **Bridge:** "Within" can encompass our gifts, strengths and assets. Highlighting and seeing the positives in everyday situations may highlight. "I noticed you really tried with your homework," " I love the way you think outside the box/ your creativity"
- **Connection:** **Around can encompass the many aspects of things that can impact MH.** A simple check-in can build connection and support positive mental health: "How was your day? What was the highlight of your day?" "You seem quiet. Is everything okay?"



ADD YOUR OWN :)

We would love to learn more about how you and your family practices wellness on social media

@MH_YRDSB (Twitter)

- Engage in cultural/identity-affirming activities
- Movement that works for you
- Chair stretches
- Listen to music/play an instrument
- Call a friend
- Open a window/get natural light
- Move/walk/bike around the neighbourhood
- Get outdoors
- Read/listen to a book
- Play guitar or other instruments
- Watch a show that lifts you up
- Cook, bake or create something
- Never be too afraid to ask for help
- Wash your face with cool water when feeling stressed or anxious
- Practice self-care

Families/ Community

- Check in to see how your child(ren) day went
- Use [School Mental Health Ontario](#) resources
- Game night
- Faith/spiritual practices
- Read together
- Listen to stories together
- Build routines that support the day to day
- Cooking together, i.e. making recipes
- Doing family activities together
- Connecting with elders in the community
- Family mindfulness
- Get outdoors together
- Explore nature
- Storytelling
- Get active together
- Do homework together

ADD YOUR OWN :) on social media @MH_YRDSB (Twitter)

My One Small Thing is?

drawings, poems, words, art and other expressions are welcomed.