



Student Mental Health and Addictions Newsletter

April 2023

YRDSB Mental Health services are provided by YRDSB psychology and social work personnel

Celebrating Neurodiversity

Dear Families,

In this edition we will focus on celebrating neurodiversity within our student population. We recognize [Autism Acceptance day](#) through highlighting strengths, characteristics, resources, and celebrating the spectrum; we want to acknowledge that families are the core support. There are many ways of thinking, learning or acting and we know that the uniqueness between us as people is to be celebrated and acknowledged. This year, we are moving to increasing acceptance.



For families who are looking to increase their understanding in supporting Autistic people, [Kerry's place](#) offers a great [Resource Portal](#) where there are [videos](#) and [handouts](#) with helpful information to expand understanding of Autism. [Kinark Autism Services](#) has created a [spring guide](#) for services available from April to June 2023 for families connected to the [Ontario Autism Program](#) for free. They also have free [Parent & Caregiver Education](#) that is available to all families.

[Autism Ontario](#) provides informational resources about the intersection between Mental health and Autism. They share how Autistic youth who also experience [Anxiety](#) may find sensory support or art therapy helpful. Sensory calming



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techniques may include a fidget object, or making sure to have noise cancelling headphones accessible. Art therapy can help many people share feelings in a creative way- this can look like painting or picking up a musical instrument!

It is important to acknowledge the diversity in experience and characteristics of Autistic youth, and learn alongside while solving problems, coping with challenges and expressing joy. When we talk about Autistic youth, it is important to note the [identity first language](#) used as this is preferred by most Autistic people. We do encourage people to check in with each person to see what language fits best for them.

Free Community Programs:

Learning Disabilities Association of York Region

- [Parents Support Group](#)- Free, monthly, virtual Zoom
- April 13th 2023, May 11th 2023, June 8th 2023
- [Online Registration](#)

Kerry's Place for Autism

- [The Rec Room](#)
 - Leisure-based online social group.
 - Mondays, April 3, 2023 to June 26, 2023
 - 4:00pm to 5:00pm
 - This group aims to increase opportunities for social interactions, fostering friendships, and having fun
 - Free to participate adolescents with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)
- [Virtual Jam Session](#)
 - Leisure-based online music group,
 - Tuesdays, April 4 to June 27, 2023
 - 6:00pm to 7:00pm
 - All ages with ASD
 - Participants join in by listening, singing along, dancing, or playing their own
- [Caregiver Non-Violent Crisis Intervention](#)
 - Saturday, April 29, 2023
 - 9:30am to 1:00pm



YRDSB Mental Health

- Caregivers program who would like to enhance their skills in managing crisis situations, and learn about de-escalation techniques. Limited spots available.
- [Online Registration](#)
- [Sibling Hang](#)
 - Thursday, April 27, 2023
 - 4:30pm to 5:30pm
 - No cost group program for youth ages 13-17 who have a sibling with a diagnosis of autism.
 - Group members will have the opportunity to learn more about ASD, and ways they may support their siblings.
 - This month's topic will be "Minute to Win it".
 - [Online Registration](#)
- [Fundamental of Autism Spectrum Disorder](#)
 - Saturday, April 22, 2023
 - 9:30am to 12:00 pm
 - Free virtual program for parents and caregivers, and community members, interested in learning more about Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD).
 - Common characteristics of ASD, possible strengths, needs, learning styles and profiles of persons with ASD will be introduced.
 - [Online Registration](#)

York Support Services Network

- [Caregivers connecting Chat Group](#)
 - April 12 , 11:00- 12:00
 - Peer Mentor Program hosts monthly virtual family drop-ins for parents or caregivers of children or adults with a developmental disability
 - [Online Registration](#)
- [Resource Day](#)
 - April 18, All day. Book a 1 hour session
 - Need help understanding the developmental services system?
 - Book a free, 1 hour session, with a case manager to discuss and ask important questions related to your situation.
 - To register call: 905-953-8354 or 1-833-953-8354
- [Mental Health Housing and Navigation Day](#)
 - April 18, All Day, Book a 1 hour session
 - Need help figuring out mental health resources and how to access



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available services in York Region and South Simcoe?

- You can book an appointment to meet with a case manager to help navigate York Region's Mental health, financial and shelter system.
- [Online Registration](#)
- [Transition Resource Day](#)
 - April 7, 12, 21, 26 All Day, Book a 1 hour session
 - Need help understanding the developmental services system and transition planning? Do you have an IEP? Book a free, 1 hour session, with a transitional planner to discuss and ask important questions related to your situation.
 - Discuss the differences between elementary and high school, share tips and strategies to help you and your child prepare for life in high school, fill out forms and applications (e.g. ODSP, SSAH, Mobility Transit, etc.), find resources, build on skills, share options for after high school and adult life
 - Registration can be done through emailing cmacdonald@yssn.ca or calling: 905-953-8354 or 1-833-953-8354 ext. 2245
- [RAMP Up Group, Relationships: Investing in Social Connections](#)
 - April 25, 1:30- 2:30
 - 16+, strengths-based, open group created from the principles of Positive Psychology
 - [Online Registration](#)

Yorkhills

- [York Hills Events - April](#)

ConnectAbility.ca

- [List of Family Groups operating in Ontario.](#)

Supportive Resources:

[YorkHills Here to Help Line](#) (905-503-9561)

The Here to Help Line is a free service available to children/youth (0-18 years) and their parents/caregiver/adult supporters. Monday to Thursday from 2:00pm-7:00p.m

[Family Services York Region](#) (905-895-2371)

Virtual walk in is operated on a first come, first serve basis, and can be accessed once per month. Virtual appointments can be 15 minutes to 1.5 hours long depending



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on your specific needs. Monday, Tuesday, Thursdays from 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

[YRDSB Mental Health Resource Page](#)

Continue to check out the [YRDSB website](#) for updated information as well as the Twitter account [@YRDSB](#)

Follow YRDSB Mental Health on Twitter [@MH_YRDSB](#)

PFlag

- [Coffee Night](#), held every second Monday of the month, is a safe space where members of the LGBTQ2 community, their friends, family or allies can come together.
- [Online Registration](#)

Family Services of York Region

- [Free to be](#)
 - Free virtual group for parents/caregivers of gender diverse children, regardless of age which meets once a month.
 - Second Tuesday of each month
 - 6:30 to 8:00 p.m

This edition of the Newsletter was written by the Student Mental Health and Addictions Strategy Implementation Team 2022–2023, inclusive of YRDSB School Social Workers Kate Phillips, Nicole Gough, Afsaneh Zafarani and Master of Social Work student, Sylvia Kuria.

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