



## Student Mental Health and Addictions Newsletter June 2020

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

### **Summer 2020 – Apart But Not Alone**

This summer may definitely yield activities and socializing with friends and loved ones in a very different way than in other years. With the COVID-19 pandemic still upon us, and physical distancing measures still in place, we must find ways to maintain our positive mental health and remain socially connected over the summer months in unique and creative ways.

Jack.org together with Kids Help Phone and School Mental Health Ontario have created a [Youth Mental Health Resource Hub](#) for students to help them in supporting themselves and others around them. They offer various ways of staying socially connected during this time of physical distancing. Over the summer, take a look at the suggestions and see how you can incorporate them into your days.

**Tell the Ones You Love** – Let people know that you're there and that you care for them. Even if they don't feel like talking right now, just knowing you're there can be helpful.

**See Some Wonderful Faces** – Hop on a FaceTime or Skype call with friends and loved ones.

**Ask for Help** – Let others know how they can help you if you need help. We are all in this together!

**Think About Who Really Needs You** – Vulnerable populations can feel especially isolated. Reach out to those that you think might need you and offer a helping hand.

**Talk About the Tough Stuff** – Sharing your thoughts with trusted friends and adults can help you talk through your fears and worries.

**Lend a Hand** – Volunteer your time! Offer to pick up groceries or run errands for those that cannot do it for themselves.

**Share Good Content** – Take a break from the COVID-19 talk. Share funny memes and jokes with friends. Laughter is wonderful therapy!

**It's the Little Things** – Kind gestures do not need to be grand. Think about what you can do to brighten someone's day. Sometimes the smallest gestures make the largest impact.

### Have some creative fun!

Although we are all experiencing the Pandemic together, our individual circumstances may be different from one another. Please consider the follow ideas as suggestions of how you may be able to add some mental health practices to your day. You can tailor them to fit your needs

**Get cooking and baking** - Explore and experiment with this skill. Perhaps think of a loved one to drop off some baked goods to at the doorstep!

**Build a garden** - Get outside, enjoy the fresh air and sunshine and plant some flowers, vegetables or herbs. The garden doesn't have to be large, but there's a sense of satisfaction and happiness in watching something grow that you planted!

**Go on a picnic** - Parks are open during the day, so keep your physical distance and enjoy the beauty of Mother Earth. Perhaps do a virtual picnic with friends. You can "be together while apart" in a creative and fun way!

**Explore your environment** - Take a walk or bike ride and explore a neighbourhood trail. Take pictures and send them to friends and loved ones.

**Parades** - Enjoy some birthday or celebration parades with friends. Create banners and signs, meet in an agreed upon location, roll down the windows and do a car parade. Hock the horn, sing songs out the window, and allow the fresh air and feelings of happiness to resonate.

### Saying so long...for now

At school, June is usually a time to wrap up learning, have some school fun such as play days and school bbq's, and say our so long, see you in September to teachers and peers. Physical distancing has definitely put a hold on these traditions which can be difficult for many people. However, we can still find ways to say so long and thank you to the educators that have put so much effort into making sure that learning continues in new and innovative ways. Take some time to write teachers a note of thanks, or thank teachers in a google meet. If you cannot do that, consider a drawing or sign that you can affix to your window. Spark your creativity and let teachers know how appreciative you are of their work and support.

During this time, the Mental Health team at YRDSB would like to take this opportunity to also thank all the educators that have worked tirelessly in ensuring that students' receive instruction and learning. We thank you.

We also thank all the front line workers that have put themselves in some danger in order to protect the public. Among these are doctors, nurses, grocery store workers,

postal service workers, delivery services, construction workers, and others. We thank you and appreciate your service to the public.

## Mental Health COVID-19 Page

COVID-19 has presented unprecedented issues and concerns for our community, our country and the world. As we focus on keeping ourselves healthy and containing the spread of COVID-19, we must also keep ourselves mentally well.

The link below is dedicated to supporting student mental health during this pandemic. Resources for students, parents/guardians as well as community resources are listed. In addition, there are various links to [YRDSB mental health supports](#) as well as [community supports](#) available during the school closure. Please consider taking some time to familiarize yourself with these supports.

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

**Patricia Marra-Stapleton, M.Sc., C. Psych. Assoc.**  
Mental Health Lead  
[patricia.marra-stapleton@yrdsb.ca](mailto:patricia.marra-stapleton@yrdsb.ca)

**Gisella Ragno, MSW RSW**  
Assistant Coordinator -Mental Health  
[gisella.ragno@yrdsb.ca](mailto:gisella.ragno@yrdsb.ca)