



STUDENT MENTAL HEALTH AND ADDICTIONS NEWSLETTER MAY 2019

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

“If we cared about our mental health like we care about our dental health, we would be okay.”

Howie Mandel

CHILDREN’S MENTAL HEALTH WEEK IS MAY 6-10

Did You Know: 1 in 5 children and youth suffer from a mental health concern?

Children and youth can experience mental health concerns that range from mild to serious. For instance, some students may have a little anxiety when they are facing a test, while others may be very anxious about the same test. When an issue lasts for more than a few weeks, and interferes with the student’s daily life, then it becomes a concern that requires further help. Depression and anxiety are the most common mental health concerns for children and youth.

This year, the York Region District School Board is celebrating Children’s Mental Health Awareness Week with the introduction of a toolkit that contains daily PA announcements, daily Classroom activities (elementary and secondary options are provided) and handout templates. All five classroom activities coincide which each day of the week. This year we have aligned our daily activities to some of the health topics found in the Health and Physical Education Curriculum. Our 5 strategies and activities are:

- Be Mindful
- Reach Out
- Exercise & Eat Healthy
- Be Grateful
- Include and Welcome



5 tips to promote mental health in your child or youth

- **Be positive role models.** Children and youth need to see us express our feelings, talk over a problem with our partner, or see things from someone else's point of view. Teach children how to reach out to others when they need help and support.
- **Promote a healthy lifestyle.** Give healthy food, make sure children and youth get enough sleep and exercise.
- **Ask children and youth how their day went.** Let them know when they've done something well (like trying hard, being patient or kind, or getting better at something). Focus on the effort, not always the result. If something is bothering or stressing them, ask if they need help to solve the problem.
- **Ask children and youth how they're feeling about things.** Some children and youth may not know how to express themselves. Help them with language to 'name' and express feelings ("OH that must have been frustrating to have to wait so long...")
- **Always take children's and youth's concerns and worries seriously.** Children and youth may believe that their feelings don't matter if we dismiss their feelings.

Suggested Reading

Fact sheet on mental health and mental illness

<http://www.cheo.on.ca/uploads/Mental%20Health/Mental%20Health%20and%20Illness%20Overview.pdf>

School Mental Health Ontario – *Every Day Mental Health Classroom* resource

<https://smh-assist.ca/emhc/>

Mental Health Initiatives 2018/2019

- Supporting Minds: The Mentally Healthy Classroom – presentations available throughout the board and at schools.
- Everyday Mental Health (K-8): Everyday practices that educators can easily embed into daily classroom life.
- Supporting Mental Health for newcomer students.
- Building community mental health partnerships with organizations, and agencies.
- Raising awareness about suicide through various presentations throughout the board.

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