



Student Mental Health and Addictions Newsletter

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

Stress and Resilience

Dear Families,

Fall is officially upon us. Symbolically, Fall represents change – leaves changing hues, cooler temperatures and an Earth preparing to rest. Fall is also a season of changes. Our abilities to embrace and adjust to change vary – some may approach change with ease, while for others adapting to change may be stressful.

Stress is normal, it is a normal response to situational pressures or demands that are a part of daily life (Centre for Addiction and Mental Health, 2023). Some common sources of stress that your child may experience include, but are not limited to: tests /exams, homework, lack of organization, too little 'down time,' poor sleep, speaking in front of their classmates and changes to routine.

Caregivers play a pivotal role in identifying and supporting young people with stress management. No two youth are the same, each bringing their unique gifts and assets. We recognize that what works for one young person, may not work for another. With that in mind, we suggest the following coping exercise as one example of a useful skill that can be used in stressful times. We invite you to consider exploring and practicing [this exercise](#) at a time that works best for you and your child. If this practice doesn't resonate, the good news is you can continue to explore others until you find something that does. And, keep in mind that you may have your own strategy for managing stress in your own life. We encourage you to share your practice or traditions with your child.



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The guided imaginary walk exercise - provided by [School Mental Health Ontario](#) provides a script for us to read bringing us through a beautiful walk. You are welcome to get creative with this idea! What are memories or places that bring calm to your family? You can use these to create guided imagery that brings the most calm to your child(ren).

Exercises like this one build skills in bringing our focus inwards, and paying attention to how we are feeling. School Mental Health Ontario reminds us that when we build skills in this area, we help the mind respond to distractions and bring our attention back to ourselves.

In line with our theme for November on stress and resilience, The YRDSB Central Mental Health Team will be offering a Virtual Parents' and Caregivers evening *"Anxiety in school aged youth, a presentation for parents and caregivers"* on November 21 at 6:00 to 7:00 p.m. Please sign up using the following [Google Form](#). Look out for more information about future events coming soon.

Supportive Resources:

[Mental Health Resources in York Region](#)

[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 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](#)

Free Community Events:

Caregivers

York Hills Centre for Children, Youth and Families



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- November 6, 6:30 pm - 8:30 pm- [Understanding and Managing Challenging Behaviours](#)
- November 15, 6:30 pm - 8:30 pm- [Plugged In](#)
- November 21, 6:30 pm - 8:30 pm- [Supporting Communication Challenges in Autism Spectrum Disorder](#)
- November 22, 6:30 pm - 8:00 pm- [Exploring and Understanding the Inattentive Brain](#)

York Services Support Network

- [Mindfulness-Base Stress Reduction Workshop \(MBSR\) 8-week series](#)
 - November 2 @ 9:30 am - 12:00 pm
 - You will learn tools for building resilience, increase your well being, manage stress, improve focus and numerous other benefits.
 - This series is for parents or caregivers of children diagnosed with autism ages 0-18.
- [Transition Planning Resource Days](#)
 - November 8 @ 9:00 am - 5:00 pm
 - Need help understanding the developmental services system and transition planning? Does your child have an IEP? Book a free, 1 hour session, with a transitional planner to discuss and ask important questions.
 - Registration can be done through emailing cmacdonald@yssn.ca or calling: 905-953-8354 or 1-833-953-8354 ext. 2245.

Students

York Services Support Network

- [Mental Health Housing and Navigation Day](#)
 - November 21 @ 11:00 am - 7:00 pm, by phone for people 16 years+
 - Need help figuring out mental health resources and how to access available services in York Region and South Simcoe?
Once a month you can book a 60-minute appointment to meet with a case manager so that you can get help with:
 - Filling out initial applications for financial assistance programs such as Ontario Works (OW), Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP), housing applications



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- Information about available community resources, such as, free counselling options, local programs, where to access shelter, food, furniture, community meals, etc.
 - Finding information on supportive housing options in York Region
 - Getting connected to ministry-funded services such as Developmental Services Ontario Central East Region (DSO CER)
- Single Session Counselling
 - [Tuesdays in November - 9:30- 10:30 am](#)
 - [Tuesdays in November - 11:00 a.m - 12:00](#)
 - [Thursdays in November- 11:00 a.m.- 12:00 p.m](#)
 - [Thursdays in November- 12:30 - 1:30 p.m](#)

Families

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](#)

This edition of the Newsletter was written by the Student Mental Health and Addictions Strategy Implementation Team 2023-2024, inclusive of YRDSB School Social Workers Kate Phillips and Peter Reid.

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