



## STAFF WELL-BEING AND MENTAL HEALTH STRATEGY

### CONTEXT

The York Region District School Board (YRDSB) recognizes the value of a healthy and productive workforce and believes that an essential part of student achievement and well-being involves the promotion of well-being for its staff. Well-being involves maintaining a balance between physical, cognitive, emotional and social resources and challenges. Staff achieve an optimal state of health when they realize their full potential and fulfill role expectations in their family, community, workplace and/or other settings.

Fostering Well-Being and Mental Health is a strategic priority of the YRDSB and the Board promotes inclusive, psychologically and physically safe and healthy workplaces as part of creating the conditions for staff mental health. Creating an inclusive, mentally healthy environment is a shared responsibility among everyone in the organization. This document provides action-oriented direction for individuals, supervisory staff and the system for fostering optimal mental health for all staff.



### BUILDING KNOWLEDGE AND CAPACITY

*Building Knowledge and Capacity* involves developing understanding, skills, strategies, and resources that promote positive mental health and resilience.

#### ACTIONS

##### System

Build a collective understanding of the conditions of an inclusive, mentally healthy environment utilizing the [National Standard for Psychological Health and Safety](#)

Increase system capacity to use the Mental Health and Drug and Alcohol Continuums

Develop a systematic, tiered approach to professional learning that promotes positive mental health and resiliency in a personal and professional context

Ensure supports are in place to facilitate professional learning, address triggers during mental health professional development and to provide ongoing mental health resources to staff such as through the Employee and Family Assistance Program (EFAP)

Continue to investigate options for capacity building for mental health issues to support conversations between staff

Leverage relevant system-wide committees to support the capacity-building process and create alignment across mental health and well-being initiatives

Provide evidence-informed resources linking research and practice to support employee health

Develop, offer and support professional learning opportunities to all employee groups in the board regarding equity, accessibility and inclusivity

Build collective understanding of anti-oppression and how privilege, power, and marginalization impact the well-being of staff members and the environments in which they work

##### Supervisory Staff

Support implementation of the Guarding Minds @ Work action plan to address the [conditions](#) for an inclusive, mentally healthy environment considering workplace factors such as [Organizational Culture](#), [Civility & Respect](#), [Workload Management](#) and [Balance](#)

Build the capacity of all staff members to model and promote positive mental health through professional conversations, school and department improvement planning and co-learning opportunities

Foster self-directed learning for staff members by supporting professional learning opportunities about mental health

Integrate mental health learning within staff professional learning activities using the Leaders' Guide to Employee Mental Health

Deepen personal and staff understanding of the impact of discrimination, harassment and bullying on employee mental health

##### Individual

Assume personal responsibility for learning about mental health

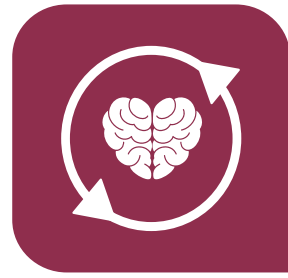
Apply new learning from Indigenous education and equity training, learning on mattering and belonging, social emotional learning and other learning opportunities to demonstrate the connection between mental health and socially diverse lived experiences in workplace practice

Promote positive mental health through professional conversations, school and department improvement planning and co-learning opportunities

Be mindful of the impact of personal mental health and well-being on others

Access and use the [mental health self-assessment tools](#) to better understand and promote personal mental health

Participate in learning opportunities to deepen personal understanding of discrimination, harassment and bullying and their impact on mental health



### DEVELOPING INCLUSIVE, MENTALLY HEALTHY ENVIRONMENTS

*Developing Inclusive, Mentally Healthy Environments* involves proactive and responsive approaches to create and sustain the conditions for optimal mental health and well-being.

#### ACTIONS

##### System

Align YRDSB mental health and addiction initiatives with the Ministry's [Ontario's Well-being Strategy for Education](#), [Ontario's Anti-Racism Strategic Plan](#) and culturally competent mental health promotion practices recommended by the [Multicultural Mental Health Resource Centre](#)

Design an implementation plan for the [National Standard for Psychological Health and Safety](#) to promote health and reduce psychological harm in the workplace

Commit to the [Healthy Schools and Workplaces Policy #218](#), [Human Rights Policy #240](#), [Violence Prevention and Intervention and Non-Code Workplace Related Harassment - Employees Policy #250](#) and Equity Action Plan to build and sustain safe, healthy, inclusive and welcoming workplace environments

Review and implement system assessment tool(s) to examine Psychological Health and Safety in the Workplace across the district

Utilize the assessment tool(s) to determine strategic priorities for implementing the [National Standard for Psychological Health and Safety](#)

Review the annual employee health report to address concerns and identify opportunities to support staff mental health

Develop and make available research-based strategies and best practices on workload management and balance

##### Supervisory Staff

Create working and learning environments that are responsive to supporting staff members at all points across the Mental Health and Addiction Continuum

Identify and address [Psychosocial Factor Risks](#) that can negatively impact staff member mental health and well-being

Evaluate work spaces and their impact on the physical safety and well-being of staff (e.g., Ergonomics, Needs Assessment Tool)

Implement the [Healthy Schools and Workplaces Policy #218](#), [Human Rights Policy #240](#), [Violence Prevention and Intervention and Non-Code Workplace Related Harassment - Employees Policy #250](#), and Equity Action Plan to build and sustain safe, healthy, inclusive and welcoming workplace environments for all staff

Review available data to set goals for creating collaborative team environments and improving staff mental health and well-being in alignment with DAP I - Foster Well-Being and Mental Health

Support the submission of a Healthy Schools and Workplaces Action Plan using the Healthy Schools and Workplaces Framework to guide planning and implementation of healthy workplace initiatives

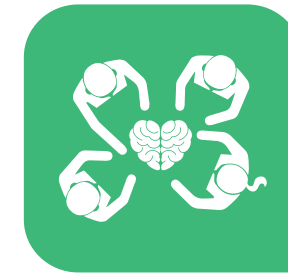
##### Individual

Personally contribute to building the conditions that promote health and well-being at work

Follow the [Healthy Schools and Workplaces Policy #218](#), [Human Rights Policy #240](#), [Violence Prevention and Intervention and Non-Code Workplace Related Harassment - Employees Policy #250](#) and Equity Action Plan to build and sustain an environment free from discrimination and harassment and where all members of the community feel safe, healthy, included and welcome

Contribute to the design and implementation of a Healthy Schools and Workplaces Action Plan using the Healthy Schools and Workplaces Framework for healthy workplace initiatives

Respect the highly sensitive nature of mental health and well-being conversations and recognize that there might be individuals who choose to not participate



### REDUCING STIGMA

*Reducing Stigma* involves broadening collective awareness and engaging in conversations about mental health and addiction and challenging existing attitudes, values, beliefs and behaviours.

#### ACTIONS

##### System

Design and implement stigma reduction initiatives identified in the Guarding Minds @ Work action plan

Remain committed to and comply with legislative policy and procedures in accordance with the [Ontario Human Rights Code](#), [Accessibility for Ontarians with Disability Act](#), YRDSB's Equity and Inclusivity policy and Equity Action Plan

Review existing YRDSB policies and procedures for opportunities to align with the [National Standard for Psychological Health and Safety](#)

##### Supervisory Staff

Facilitate access to and use of district-approved stigma reduction resources

Collaborate with all stakeholders to plan, implement and model strategies that increase awareness and reduce the stigma of mental health and addiction

Ensure interdepartmental communication and coordination for a comprehensive approach to stigma reduction

Implement actions that build and sustain a [stigma-free environment](#) and [promote inclusivity](#) in the workplace

Engage staff in learning about how stigma can hurt all people, especially those challenged by mental health and addiction difficulties (e.g., use of training modules in the Leaders' Guide to Employee Mental Health)

##### Individual

Use district-approved stigma reduction resources designed for schools and workplaces

Model and contribute to a stigma-free workplace environment for all employees

Foster a culture of engagement and inclusion by building trusting relationships that support open and honest dialogue

Participate in learning about how stigma can hurt all people, especially those struggling with mental health and addiction difficulties



### CREATING COLLABORATIVE CARE PATHWAYS

*Creating Collaborative Care Pathways* engages all stakeholders in an inclusive community that provides clear access to mental health and addiction supports and services.

#### ACTIONS

##### System

Develop partnerships with community organizations to leverage support systems and health promotion resources (e.g., York Region Public Health, Canadian Cancer Society, Heart and Stroke Foundation, Canadian Mental Health Association, and faith- or identity-based organizations)

Ensure staff and their families have access to the Employee and Family Assistance Program (EFAP) and supportive [community resources](#) as appropriate for use in schools and workplaces

Actively support the Healthy Schools and Workplaces Committee and Networking conferences to ensure collaboration between healthy schools and healthy workplaces in a whole school community approach

Ensure that healthy workplaces and staff mental health continue to be priorities for the Mental Health at Work Steering Committee and other relevant system-wide committees as appropriate

Create and maintain a workplace support resource which identifies care pathways and resources that deliver prevention and intervention services (e.g., Employee and Family Assistance - EFAP, Disability Management)

Develop and implement an online partnership application process for evaluating agencies that wish to deliver evidence-informed mental health, addiction and other well-being programs and services

Investigate the feasibility of peer led "issue based" support groups (e.g., staff who have a child with cancer; bereavement, separation/divorce, mental health)

Create a communication plan to raise awareness of available staff mental health supports

##### Supervisory Staff

Collaborate with the Wellness Advisor (Human Resource Services) or Well-Being school or workplace leader to source approved external mental health and well-being providers when planning for staff mental health and well-being learning opportunities or activities

Participate in, and encourage staff to participate in, Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training (ASIST) and safeTALK as appropriate

Identify and share support resources with teams (e.g., Employee and Family Assistance Program, YRDSB Disability Management Team, York Region Mental Health Resource List; Mental Health Workplace Resources)

##### Individual

Be familiar with and access the care pathways, programs, services and resources available

Follow the established processes outlined in the Equity Action Plan that enable students, staff and community members to report incidents of discrimination and harassment safely and that will enable the Board to respond impartially in a timely and effective manner (i.e., 5.2a Equity)

### RESOURCES

Aligning resources effectively, purposefully and efficiently to focus on what matters most is a key leadership function. Resources have been identified to support the implementation of the Staff Well-Being and Mental Health Strategy.