

TCDSB Student Mental Health Newsletter

May 2019



Mental Health Week is May 6-12!

Mental health is defined as a state of well-being in which every individual realizes his or her own potential, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to his or her community (WHO). Mental health is not the same thing as mental illness. We know that in any given year 20% of us will experience a mental health problem or illness. Regardless of whether we currently have a mental illness or not, we ALL have mental health, the same way we all have physical health. CAM-H has created a great video on the topic of mental illness versus mental health, see the below link.

<https://www.bing.com/videos/search?q=mental+health+mental+illness+video+camh&view=detail&mid=E70E3A5ECED20E68DDE2E70E3A5ECED20E68DDE2&FORM=VIRE>

6 Signs of GOOD MENTAL HEALTH

1. I feel like I'm reaching my potential.
2. I feel like I belong.
3. I don't worry too much about what others think of me.
4. I make the world a better place.
5. I enjoy my life.
6. Knock me down and I'll get back up again.

(CMHA)

Nature is Nurturing



Research shows that when we immerse ourselves in the natural world, our sense of well-being is heightened. You don't need to spend the day in a forest to reap the benefits. Spending time in a backyard, a schoolyard, a nearby park or near a neighborhood tree will do. The benefits can be gained whether you are actively doing something in a natural setting or simply viewing the setting. It is important to be "in the moment," so try enforcing a no electronics rule for outdoor time. Now that warmer weather is coming, it is a good time to start creating new routines that incorporate outdoor time, rain or shine (*Psychology Today*; CMHA).

Outdoor Inspiration for Children...

- Have a picnic
- Observe an insect
- Draw pictures in the dirt
- Look for different shades of green while on a walk
- Explore the design of a cobweb
- Paint on rocks with water
- Look for pictures in the clouds

Outdoor Inspiration for Older Children/Youth...

- Walk to school instead of taking the bus
- Eat lunch outside
- Go for a jog or a bike ride with a friend
- Join the environmental club at school (or start one)
- Organize a neighbourhood scavenger hunt
- Take a younger sibling or neighbour outside
- Walk the family dog

If You Are Concerned About Your Child

If you are concerned your child may be struggling, look at whether there are changes in how the child is thinking, feeling or acting. Also pay attention to how the child is functioning at home, at school and with friends (cps.ca). There are professionals and other caring adults you can consult with to determine next steps and identify supports for your child. Consider the following:

- Talk to the child/adolescent to find out what's going on and how he/she is feeling
- Talk to the classroom teacher(s) to see if they also notice the changes/concerns
- Discuss your observations with the family doctor
- Inquire with the school principal about mental health supports available at school, such as the guidance counselor, social worker, psychologist, or Child and Youth Worker
- In case of emergency proceed to your local **hospital** or call 911



Studies have shown that individuals who pray to a loving and protecting God, with whom they have a meaningful relationship, are less likely to experience symptoms of anxiety (psychcentral.com).

A Holistic Approach to Well-Being



The Ministry of Education's model for well-being highlights the need to support our children and youth's development in each of the four domains.

PHYSICAL: Encourage good sleep patterns, physical activity, and healthy eating.

COGNITIVE: Teach and model problem solving skills and critical thinking.

EMOTIONAL: Support children/youth in recognizing different emotions; model good coping skills.

SOCIAL: Encourage positive relationships and model good communication skills.

Community Mental Health Resources

Kids Help Phone 1-800-668-6868

<https://kidshelpphone.ca/>

Professional and confidential counseling available 24/7 via phone. Text and live chat also available – see website.

What's Up Walk-In Counseling

<http://www.whatsupwalkin.ca/>

Professional and confidential walk-in counseling for children, youth, young adults and their families. No fee. No appointment. No Health Card. Six locations across Toronto. See website for locations and hours of operation.

A Laugh a Day...

"A good sense of humor is a tool that kids can rely on throughout life..." It helps children to "see beyond the surface of things" and "not take themselves too seriously" (www.kidshealth.org).

