

Student Mental Health and Well-Being



Newsletter

TCDSB Mental Health Services provided by **Psychology, Social Work, and Guidance** personnel

Making Room for Our Negative Feelings Can Actually Make Us Happier

It's not an uncommon desire. In fact, it may be a near-universal one. With varying levels of success, we try to hold on to good emotions and ward off the bad ones — but research suggests that those efforts, at least when it comes to negative feelings, may be misplaced.

We often overlook the potential benefits that our “negative” emotions offer. For example, having a “nervous” feeling as we approach a deadline in school or at work, may indeed motivate us to reach the finish line. In addition, countless studies indicate that people who “accept” their emotions, both positive and negative, spend less time thinking about feeling “upset”. This leaves more mental space for dealing with the event, and problem solving. Accepting one’s emotions is different than accepting the situation that caused the emotion. Accepting one’s emotions asks that we avoid placing judgment on our emotions. It is not “bad” to feel sad.

A recent psychology study conducted by Brett Ford at the University of Toronto, found that those who accepted their negative feelings were, on average, also more psychologically healthy.



They also found that the factor most strongly linked to participants’ well-being wasn’t a low-stress life — rather, it was the capacity to accept life’s difficulties and one’s own negative feelings nonjudgmentally.

On the face of it, this is a counterintuitive idea. A person with, say, no medical or financial issues — someone who should theoretically have low stress — ought to have greater well-being than a poorer, less healthy person who’s working 70 hours a week. And yet if the latter person is better at accepting the negative experiences that come with their objectively more difficult life, this study suggests, they may be happier than the person who has fewer stressors in life.

This research underscores the important role that acceptance of our emotions and state of mind can be a powerful tool. This acceptance is difficult, especially in a society that values and praises the pursuit of happiness. We need to make room for the negative and make peace with it too. (C. Delestraty, New York Magazine, Aug. 2017)

Mental Health Benefits of Prayer

During Lent we are encouraged to engage in almsgiving, fasting and prayer. Our focus this month is on prayer and it's many benefits.

God is a source of comfort, strength and love for us. Through prayer we enter into a deeper relationship with God and gain a sense of attachment to Him. Many studies have shown that individuals who pray to a loving and protective God with whom they have a meaningful relationship are less likely to experience anxiety and stress. Prayer offers emotional comfort and reduces stress by:

- **Offering a sense of comfort and hope.** When you're faced with life challenges, prayer offers a sense of comfort. Knowing that God listens to your prayers and that you don't have to bear your burden alone offers a sense of hope. When you feel hopeful you gain strength and are encouraged to carry on.
- **Creating a positive frame of mind.** By giving thanks and expressing gratitude when praying it creates a positive frame of mind. When you purposefully engage in "thankful prayer" it reminds you of the many blessings you have, and as a result helps to decrease feelings of sadness.
- **Stress Relief.** Researchers have found that when focusing on other people through prayer it contributes to a "stress-buffering effect". Reflecting on the welfare of others can reduce your own stress - it is in giving to others that we receive.
- **Increases feelings of unity and trust.** Praying together with a friend, your class, or as a community is an experience that brings people closer together. Prayer can help build relationships and feelings of social connectedness.

Engaging in daily prayer with students gives them the opportunity to deepen their relationship with God and their community. It also offers a sense of emotional comfort that everyone can benefit from. Prayer is joy

Prayer is love

Prayer is peace.

You cannot explain it you must experience it.

It is not impossible.

God gives it for the asking.

"Ask and you shall receive."

The father knows what to give his children

--how much more our heavenly father knows - *Mother Teresa*

Information obtained from the following sources: www.spiritualityhealth.com;

www.psychcentral.com

www.psychologytoday.com; Catholic Book of Prayer – compiled by Ruth M. Hannon

Focus on the SCHOOL:

The TCDSB Pastoral Plan 2015-18 “Together with one Voice: Harmonizing Our Faith Through Family, Parish, and School” 2018 focuses on the SCHOOL

Family, Parish and School – Unity in Diversity...

Though it is our goal to highlight in depth each community of faith from the educational “village” of family, parish and school every year, it is imperative for us to remember that each of these communities is not simply a discordant or isolated entity; instead, each with the richness of its diversity adds greatness to the harmony of God’s music of love. In other words, the unity of the whole (family, parish and school) does not and should not undermine the uniqueness of the individual. This relationship of unity in diversity reflects St. Paul’s notion of many parts, one body (1 Cor. 12: 12-26). This present pastoral plan challenges us as a Board to continue to encourage this ‘symphony’ and build a harmony with ‘ONE VOICE’ in order to develop, celebrate and nurture the wholeness of the human person in our beautiful but sometimes discordant world

Suggested Readings and Websites:

Websites:

www.childdevelopmentinfo.com (provides information related to child development, psychology, health, parenting, learning, media, entertainment, and family activities)

www.funattic (provides ideas for fun activities and games)

www.psychcentral.com

<https://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/handy-hints-humans/201609/why-its-good-feel-sad>

Mental Health Initiatives 2017-18

- Building partnerships with community agencies, families, and parishes
- SAFE TALK suicide awareness workshops for staff available via PAL
 - Support for schools in developing a Mentally Healthy Classroom. A 30 min presentation available to your school by Social Work or Psych. More Info on the Ministry’s website and edugains.ca.
- Building partnerships with community agencies, families, and parishes

A Laugh a Day



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