

# Student Mental Health and Well-Being



## Newsletter

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

### *It's Spring! Time for Some Fresh Air and Well-Being!*

Many adults enjoy the serenity of spending time in nature as a way to escape the stress and craziness of everyday life. Not only can fresh air and natural scenery have a positive impact on adults, outdoor activities for children can also improve the overall quality of kids' lives.

Dr. Susanne Preston, a Clinical Mental Health instructor at South University, (Virginia) says being outside and spending time in nature is good for a person's mental health, as it allows them to de-stress.

Fresh air and sunlight exposure elevates mood and well-being. According to Dr. Preston, "Research has shown that spending time in nature has been associated with decreased levels of mental illness, with the strongest links to reduced symptoms of depression and anxiety, in addition to increased self esteem," .

Activities don't need to be elaborate, taking walks around the park or neighborhood, stretching, and meditation are healthy, relaxing ways to get some fresh air.



The July 2010 The Harvard Newsletter lists five good reasons to get outdoors and spend time in nature:

Your vitamin D levels rise. Sunlight hitting the skin begins a process that leads to the creation and activation of vitamin D. Studies suggest that this vitamin helps fight certain conditions, from osteoporosis and cancer to depression and heart attacks.

You'll get more exercise. if you make getting outside a goal, that should mean less time in front of the television and computer and more time walking and doing other things that put the body in motion.

You may be happier. Light tends to elevate people's mood, and there's usually more light available outside than in. Physical activity has been shown to help people relax and cheer up, so if being outside replaces inactive pursuits with active ones, it might also mean more smiles. Your concentration may improve. Children with ADHD seem to focus better after being outdoors. It might be a stretch to say that applies to adults, but if you have trouble concentrating, outdoor activity may help.

## Fresh Air Benefits for Children and youth



Many sources claim that lack of time spent playing outside in the fresh air can be harmful to a child's wellbeing.

It damages physical and mental health, and some claim that it contributes to nature-deficit disorder, which is the term used to describe the human costs of alienation from nature.

Spending time in natural surroundings stimulates children's creativity.

There are many positive health benefits associated with outdoor activities for children.

Children who regularly experience nature play are healthier, happier, and achieve better in school. Studies indicate that direct exposure to nature can relieve the symptoms of attention-deficit disorders, improve resistance to stress and depression, increase self-esteem, stimulate cognitive development and creativity, as well as reduce myopia and lower child obesity.

Dr. Preston ( Dr. Susanne Preston, a Clinical Mental Health instructor at South University, ( Virginia) ) agrees that outdoor activities for children offer countless benefits for kids' overall wellbeing.

"Spending time in natural surroundings stimulates children's creativity," Preston says. "Spending time outdoors also encourages children to actively play, which is good for them, rather than spend time focused on electronic media, television, and video games."

Exploring nature is a great way for a family to spend time together and enjoy some healthy activities.

It is important to make outdoor time a priority.

Luckily as our days lengthen and the weather takes a positive turn, there may be more opportunities for us to get outdoors and enjoy.

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

[www.funattic](http://www.funattic) (provides ideas for fun activities and games)

<https://www.cmho.org/> (Children’s Mental health Ontario)

[www.psychcentral.com](http://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](http://edugains.ca).
- Building partnerships with community agencies, families, and parishes

## A Laugh A Day ....



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