



AMDSB MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLNESS

May 2018 – First Edition

The purpose of this newsletter is to share Mental Health and Well-Being information. We hope to release newsletters at least semi-annually. In addition, it is Children’s Mental Health Week May 7-13, so it is an opportunity to highlight our work to support mental health and well-being, although this is important to do every day!

One in five children and youth face various mental health problems, mental health illnesses or addiction, all of which are great significance for families, schools, and communities. Five in five of us have mental health, just like we all have dental health and physical health. Everyone benefits from promoting and acknowledging the importance of positive mental health.

What does strong, positive mental health and well-being look like? Visit: <https://vimeo.com/130580621>



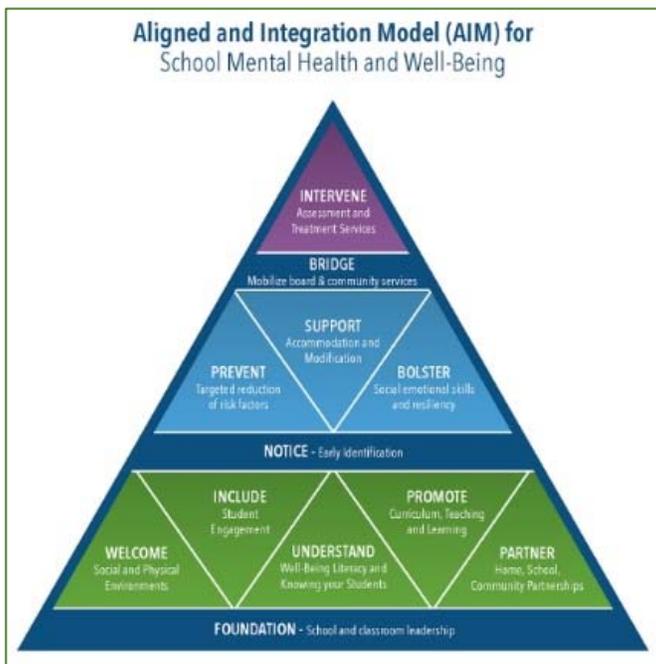
#GetLoud
about what mental health really is.

I FEEL

LIKE I

BELONG.

MENTALHEALTHWEEK.CA



There is a clear relationship between student mental health and academic achievement. Schools have an important role to play in the promotion of well-being, prevention of student mental health concerns, and intervention. We are using the framework from School Mental Health Assist and our thinking is in tiers:

Tier 1 Mental Health Promotion (Good for All, 100%)

There are five core elements schools can use to promote positive mental health.

Welcome - Welcoming and accepting school environments inspire a sense of belonging and help nurture a student’s identity within a larger community.

<https://www.cnet.com/news/teacher-handshakes-barry-white-good-morning-america-viral-facebook/>

- Include** - Students need to be engaged in their education and have their voices heard.
- Understand** - School staff learn how to notice students and colleagues who may be struggling with mental health.
- Promote** - Students learn the skills, attitudes, knowledge and habits that build their personal resilience.
- Partner** - Staff support students to, from and through mental health care when necessary.

Tier 2 Mental Health Prevention/Early Intervention (Necessary for Some, 12-15%)

Some students require school staff and mental health partners to provide support. School staff such as Student Services/Guidance, Student Success, Strive, etc., and Board-level staff such as Student Support Team, Psych Team, etc provide support. Our partner agencies such as the Health Units nurses, Mental Health and Addiction Nurses, and Choices for Change also provide support.

Tier 3 Mental Health Intervention (Essential for a Few (2-5%))

A few students require specialized interventions, and to be supported to and from pathways to care, for example, Huron Perth Helpline and Crisis Response Team, Huron Perth Centre for Children and Youth, Children's Aid Society, and others.

MENTAL HEALTH WEEK – May 7 – 13th

The week highlights mental health awareness.

To celebrate Children's Mental Health Week, a wave of green will sweep over Ontario. Over 100 buildings will shine green: for example, CN Tower, Peace Bridge, and the Healing Garden Monument at CPRI in London. You are encouraged to wear green – green clothes, a green ribbon. See your School Mental Health and Well-Being Champion for a ribbon mandala to colour green.

Activities happening in AMDSB during Mental Health Week:

- Stand by the door and greet each student with an open heart and welcoming smile.
- Positive Affirmation Wall – students and staff post their affirmations on a board to be shared.
- Laughter – Encourage your students to come with a joke to share with the class.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=80hcQJuo6NE>
- Mindfulness Monday – Classes are encouraged to use meditation several times during the day. Apps available for free download are: Mindshift, 5 Min. Relax, Smiling Mind, OMG Meditate.
- Fitness Friday – fitness and exercise play an important role in positive mental health. Go for a walk with your class.
- Take a technology break - Encourage the students to go through the day without devices; students check their devices at the door for the day. If students can go the whole day without their devices, they earn a pizza.
- Wellness Tree – students are encouraged to place a leaf on the tree to share how they keep themselves well.
- Host a pancake breakfast for all with live music.
- Participate in a nature walk with clean up along the way
- Hold a concert such as “Green Day Cover Band” will be featured.
- Fun, well-being focused activities to build staff-student relationships such as music, fitness, meditation, gratitude session, board games, etc.
- Wear school clothing and sign canvas solidifying that we are “stronger together”.
- Wellness Days.
- And more – ask your colleagues what is working!



Please take photos of mental health and well-being activities at your school and share with us (using photos with permission to share).

Staff Self-Care

It is also important to include Staff Self-Care during the Mental Health and Wellness week, and every day!

“Self-care is just like the oxygen mask on a plane. We need to place it on ourselves before we can possibly hope to help others.” School Mental Health Assist 2017

Staff Self-care ideas:

- Arrange for potluck meals, special snacks at school
- Consider bringing in a Reflexologist to do mini reflexology sessions, or a RMT to do neck and shoulder massages for staff
- Reach out to Morneau Shepell at <https://www.workhealthlife.com/> for reassurance or timely support

For more ideas, see School Mental Health Assist “The Basics of Self-Care”.

<https://smh-assist.ca/wp-content/uploads/Personal-Resilency.pdf>

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When do mental health problems typically begin?

In Canada, at what age do most mental health problems begin?

- A. There is no majority age.
- B. 70% of mental health problems start in childhood or adolescence.
- C. 60% of mental health problems start in early adulthood.

Check out the answer. https://play.library.utoronto.ca/9te6L_0sv1Jr

This interesting and informative lecture from a psychologist at OISE reminds of the developmental aspect and the need in our schools.

Results of survey completed at the Principal/Champion Sessions - 2018

	Elementary Schools <small>(based on responses per school, 28/31 schools)</small>	Secondary Schools <small>(based on responses per school, 7/9 schools)</small>
Top Mental Health Concerns **	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Anxiety 2. ADHD 3. Social Relations 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Anxiety 2. Depression 3. Social Relations
Top 3 Strengths	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Caring Staff 2. The number of activities in our schools 3. Importance placed on well-being 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Caring Staff 2. Community Partners 3. Resilient kids, supportive kids, kind students
Top 3 Needs	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Increase in external mental health staff 2. Increase in internal staff to help assist students 3. Let go of deadline stressors, need time to show kids we care 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Increase in community counsellors in schools – shorter waiting lists 2. Increase in Internal supports for mental health 3. Better emotional regulation skills for students

** based on perceived small number of students, not magnitude of the problem

Tier 1 Mental Health Promotion Strategies

Belly Breathe for young students

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mZbzDOpyIA&noredirect=1>

Relax and Breathe Suggestions by Marjery Holmes, Student Success Teacher, Central Huron SS

Simple Breaths

- 3 slow and steady breaths (in through the nose and out through the mouth).
- SMILE to relax the muscles in your face.

Square Breath technique

- Breathing in through the nose draw a line up
- Do nothing and draw a line across
- Breathing out through the mouth draw a line down
- Do nothing and draw a line across

Margery's favourite pick for music is "Oriental Sunrise" by Riley Yee.

"When the breathing is calmed the mind automatically becomes more settled". Alistair Shearer

Tier 2 Mental Health Prevention/Early Intervention

A great resource to learn how to recognize and respond to mental health problems among students is the Ministry of Education's "Supporting Minds – an Educator's Guide to Promoting Students' Mental Health and Well-Being".

Check it out:

<http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/document/reports/SupportingMinds.pdf>

For Information about Opioids:

Choices for Changes – resources - info about alcohol and drugs <http://choicesforchange.ca/>

<https://smh-assist.ca/wp-content/uploads/Info-Sheet-Prescription-Opioids-Educator-English.pdf>

AMDSB has approximately 90 grade 7-12 staff trained in Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training (ASIST)

What Happens While Waiting?

by Cathy Graham, Clinical Manager

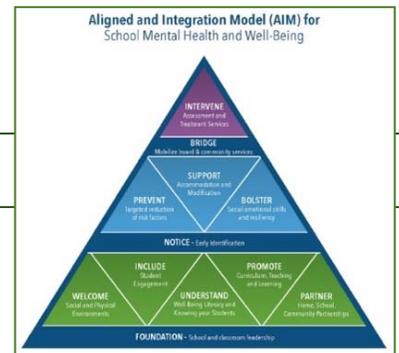
Timely Access is the front door service of Huron Perth Centre.

After a family calls, they are assigned a counsellor - usually within 5 business days a range of services are offered. These services include Drop In (on Tuesday mornings in Stratford and Clinton), solution focused counselling, referrals for Tele- mental Health and other appropriate assessments and consultation/coordination with school and community services that are involved with the child and family. From there a plan is made that may include additional HPC services like Counselling and Therapy, other HPC services, and/or referrals can be made to other community resources.

We believe that consultations with school and other resources in the child's life is integral to understanding a child and family's needs and we welcome the opportunity to do so.

With consent from the family we can have specific consultations regarding a child and without consent we are still open to non-identifying conversation regarding general questions or concerns you might have. This is also an important part of planning together how best to engage a family who may be unsure about calling us to become involved with our services.

For more information you are welcome to call us or check us out at www.hpcentre.on.ca.



Mental Health Supports

Organization	Telephone Phone Number
Huron Perth Helpline and Crisis Response Team	1-888-829-7484
Huron Perth Centre for Children and Youth Clinton Stratford Listowel	519-482-3931 519-273-3373 519-291-1088
Huron Perth Children's Aid Society Goderich Stratford	519-524-0183 519-271-52909
SW LHIN Mental Health and Addiction Nurse (for Huron)	Contact the MHAN connected to your school by cell phone or email
Perth District Health Unit School Based Nurse (for Perth)	Contact the nurse connected to your school by cell phone or email
Choices for Change (alcohol and drug misuse counselling)	519-271-6730 or 1-877-218-0077
Family Health Teams and Family Physicians	Consult your area
Employee Assistance Programs Morneau Shepell	800-387-4765
Other:	

Find help in your community www.southwesthealthline.ca www.211ontario.ca

Stress

by Dr. Anne Robinson, Mental Health Lead

Stress is a normal part of life. Stress is the body's reaction to the demands put on it by the environment, relationships, and perceived issues. It can give students energy to deal with whatever comes their way. Stress is defined differently for every person. Something that triggers stress in one person may not faze another. It is important to remember that stress is not only manifested in negative circumstances. Positive events can also be stressful (attending a school dance). However, too much stress may interfere with the student's ability to learn at school, relate with others, and with their overall well-being.

Signs of stress

- Physical – stomach aches, headaches, muscle tension, change in sleep patterns
 - Emotional – irritability, sadness, frustration, anger
 - Mental – forgetfulness, poor concentration, difficulty problem-solving
 - Behavioural – difficulty getting along with others, crying, reduced motivation, change in appetite, school absences, grades declining
- 

Stress

Supportive Strategies in Class (For All)	Additional Supportive Strategies for Specific Students with Stress				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be warm and welcoming • Establish predictability and routines: if changing, communicate the change • Include physical movement everyday • Ensure students have nutritious meals and snacks • Encourage student to get enough sleep and rest • Include something enjoyable for students – listening to music, arts and crafts, board games • Embed calm breathing and relaxation practices • Build supports and teach coping skills 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Observe to identify time, task, and impact • Work with the school team and parents to determine consistent expectations for the student • Check in with student at the beginning of the day • Provide emotional support – listen to the student and show you care • Pair student with student who is open and welcoming • Reduce unnecessary stressors – identify stresses at school, create a plan to reduce stresses or problem-solve • Refer to school counsellor if need be. 				
<p>Create a Toolbox</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Remember</th> <th>Materials</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Calm/Breathing strategies Realistic Thinking Coping Cards</td> <td>Music, story Worry doll/box Sensory objects</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>		Remember	Materials	Calm/Breathing strategies Realistic Thinking Coping Cards	Music, story Worry doll/box Sensory objects
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Stress is caused by an existing stress causing factor or stressor, for example, writing exams. Anxiety is stress that continues after the stressor is gone.

See “Anxiety at School” from School Mental Health Assist for more information.

<https://smh-assist.ca/wp-content/uploads/Info-Sheets-Supporting-Minds-Anxiety.pdf>

Tragic Events

After a tragic event, it can be difficult to know how to support children and youth. In light of recent events in Canada and beyond, School Mental Health Assist has created an Info-Sheet for Educators on Tragic Events.

<https://smh-assist.ca/wp-content/uploads/InfoSheet-for-Educators-on-Tragic-Events.pdf>

Thank you for the supportive work you do each and every day to support AMDSB students!
You matter!