



## Special Education Superintendent Update

February 2021

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During the month of February, we focus on the many different ways psychology can help improve our everyday lives and overall well-being, and support us with balancing the many roles and responsibilities we have with children, adolescents, parents, and school staff. The goal is to create awareness of, and interest in, the diverse roles psychology plays, and to share with the public how psychology contributes to the overall well-being of the school community. More information can be found at our Psychology webpage and twitter account.

Presentations for our school community continue this month with a number of learning opportunities for teachers. There will be two presentations for secondary teachers: The first is *Taking care of ourselves and our students: Grief, Big Emotions, and Self-care in the time of the Pandemic*. The second, presented with our Social Work colleagues, covers *TCDSB Suicide Intervention Guidelines*.

Teachers supporting students in the Learning Disability Intensive Support Program classrooms will receive professional learning this month on *Using Information in the Psychology Report to Support Students with Learning Disabilities*. The presentation will examine how learning disabilities are diagnosed, the types of challenges students have, what they look like in the classroom, and how to support their particular learning needs.

Psychology staff continue to deliver the workshop *Trauma-Informed Classrooms* to local school communities.

# What services do School Psychology Professionals offer?



**School Psychology Professionals utilize their knowledge of child & adolescent development, along with their understanding of school climate & culture to **provide these 5 levels of service****



## Direct Student-focused

- Psychological assessment to determine/diagnose learning, behaviour & mental health problems/disorders
- Specific recommendations, plans & goals for intervention & progress monitoring
- Individual & group counselling & other mental health interventions



## Indirect Student-focused

- Consultation with school personnel
- Parent collaboration
- Interagency liaison



## Whole Class & School-wide

- Participate in problem solving teams
- Advise & direct prevention & early intervention programs
- Provide professional development for school personnel



## System & District Wide

- Develop & implement academic & mental health screening
- Evaluate intervention & prevention programs
- Develop & implement inclusive parenting programs



## Educational research design & statistical analysis:

- Project design & planning
- Data collection, analysis & interpretation of results
- Translation of findings into practical applications



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## SOCIAL WORK



The Social Work Department has engaged in Professional Development about *Suicide Intervention and Brief Digital Interventions through School Mental Health Ontario*. We are continuing to increase support at St Anne's Academy and meaningfully engage students having attendance challenges.



On the January 15<sup>th</sup> Professional Activity (PA) Day, the Autism Department provided the following professional learning opportunities to elementary support staff. The feedback from each session was very positive.

### Supporting Students with Autism Virtually and In-Person

**Description:** Staff will become familiar using resources while supporting students with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) in the virtual and in-person setting. They will also learn about resources created by the Autism Team found on the portal. Staff will also view videos created by the Autism Team focusing on ABA strategies.

"The content was great and seemed only to be the tip of the iceberg."

"I have learned great strategies to support the students' learning. Keep up the great work!"

### The Role of ABA and BCBAs in the TCDSB & Be the Reinforcer: Pairing 101

**Description:** Learn about the use of Applied Behaviour Analysis (ABA) in our Board as well as how the Board's Board Certified Behaviour Analysts (BCBA) can help support the learning and behavioural needs of students. For the portion on Be the Reinforcer: Pairing 101, participants will learn strategies to improve student engagement and compliance.

"I enjoyed the workshop very much. It's good to know that the TCDSB has employed BCBAs to assist us with our special needs children."

"Excellent workshop"

### Understanding & Addressing Challenging Behaviours of Students with Autism Spectrum Disorder

**Description:** This workshop will identify underlying causes of behavior difficulties and functions of behavior as they relate to students with ASD. Discussion will address challenges with social communication, repetitive/stereotyped behaviours, difficulties with perspective taking, and co-morbid diagnoses that impact behaviour. Participants will have a better understanding of the functions of challenging behaviour and effective strategies to implement change.

"Excellent presentation. Enjoyed listening to the examples and videos."

"Wonderful presenter who is engaging and welcomes feedback."



SPECIAL SERVICES



The occasion of Bell Let's Talk, the Mental Health team developed a Calendar of Wellness Activities for the week of Jan 25-29 with videos, PA messaging and wellness virtual classroom activities for the Week of Jan 25-29, 2021.



Mental Health Newsletter - Winter 2021 Edition was distributed to our parents, guardians and families: [Mental Health Newsletter - Winter 2021](#)

As part of a new initiative, a monthly system-wide email focused on *Challenging Negative Thinking* with embedded videos and activities for staff as well as activities for the classroom.



Professional In-Service offered to all Teaching and Learning Collaborative resource educators on *How to Foster a Mentally Healthy Classroom as well as Staff Well-Being: How to Foster Our Own Resiliency During COVID-19*.

*Self-Directed Suicide Awareness Course* offered to 40 Support Staff followed by webinar on TCDSB Suicide Guidelines to allow support staff to be better prepared to support students who may present with suicidal ideation.

Professional Development on *Staff Well-Being: How to Foster Our Own Resiliency During COVID-19*, was offered to TCDSB business leaders.