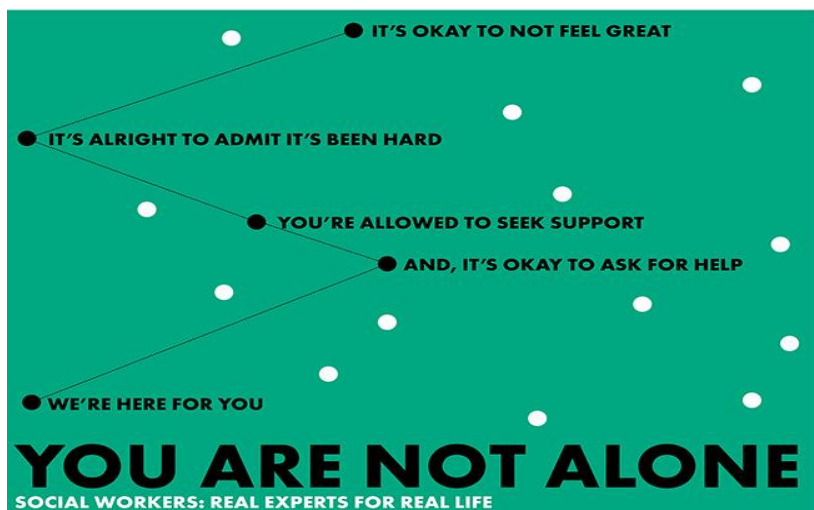




SPECIAL SERVICES

Special Education Superintendent Update

March 2021



SOCIAL WORK MONTH

Your mental health is essential. We're here on the front lines. We've been here for your family. We've been here for your friends, and we've been here for your neighbours. We're here for you too.
VISIT OASW.ORG



ONTARIO ASSOCIATION OF SOCIAL WORKERS



SCHOOL SOCIAL WORKERS

School Social Workers are employed by the Toronto Catholic District School Board in order to provide support to students, families and schools. They assist in enhancing a student's adjustment, well-being and achievement in school.

School Social Workers hold a minimum of a Master's Degree in Social Work (MSW). They are regulated by the Ontario College of Social Workers and Social Service Workers (OCSWSSW) and are bound by its standards of practice.

SERVICES WE PROVIDE

The role of the School Social Worker is to support students, on a short-term basis, in their development of a healthy sense of well-being and in their ability to reach their full academic, social-emotional and spiritual potential. A range of services may include:

- Advocacy
- Assessment
- Classroom and school-wide interventions
- Community liaison
- Consulting with school staff
- Counseling individuals, families and groups
- Crisis intervention
- Crisis Response and Intervention
- Prevention programs
- Refer and support alternative education programs
- Referrals to appropriate community agencies
- Staff professional development and education
- Suicide Risk Reviews
- Threat and Risk Assessment

ISSUES WE ADDRESS

School Social Workers are mental health professionals equipped to address concerns such as:

- Abuse and neglect
- Anger and stress management
- Anxiety
- Attendance
- Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD)/ Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)
- Autism Spectrum Disorders
- Behaviour management
- Bereavement
- Bullying/Cyberbullying
- Divorce and Separation
- Domestic and Family Violence
- Healthy Relationships
- Learning Difficulties
- Mental Health Disorders
- Self-Esteem
- Self-harming behaviour
- Substance use
- Suicidal ideation
- Suspension and Expulsion
- Threat and Risk Assessment
- Trauma

SPECIALTY PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

In addition to offering a broad range of services, School Social Workers hold positions in specialized programs such as:

- Attendance Counsellor
- Autism Team
- Deaf and Hard of Hearing Team
- Monsignor Fraser College, St. Martin Campus (expulsion program)
- Safe Schools
- Supervised Alternative Learning (SAL)
- Transitional Intervention Program for Suspended Students (TIPSS)
- Urban Priority Project

REFERRAL PROCESS

Social Work services are provided with the informed and written consent of parents or guardians. Requests for social work service can be made by contacting the school Principal or Vice Principal.



The social work department is engaging in professional Development through Liberation Practice International which helps facilitate ways of working to integrate equity, trauma informed practice, relationship building and leadership perspectives into everyday practice.

The Psychology Department continues to serve students directly through psychoeducational assessments to determine or diagnose learning, behavioural and mental health problems, and through counselling and mental health interventions. We also continue to provide consultation with parents and school staff, as well as psychology education for school staff and the community.





On the February 12th Professional Activity Day, the Autism Department provided the following professional learning opportunities to 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 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.

"Very informative, love the sharing of ideas and learned something new, thank you."

"I hope to experience more training and workshops to enhance the learning of our most vulnerable students. Thank you for this workshop and additional training that is imperative for the future progression of our students."

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.

"The workshop was very helpful and informative. The examples were explained in details and I learned new strategies to use with my students in class."

"Very formative! I will recommend it to others."



Surrey Place also offered the following webinars on the February 12th Professional Activity Day.

Self-Regulation Module

This half hour module will introduce participants to the concepts of self-regulation and co-regulation. The module will identify how anxiety and stress impact self-regulation in students with an ASD. By the end of the session, participants will begin to identify skill gaps in their students that will facilitate teaching of self-regulation skills and tools.

Visuals Module: Creating a First Then Board

This thirty-minute module will show teachers the benefits of including visuals in their classroom practices. After introducing why visuals are a useful tool for students with ASD, it will demonstrate the best practices of including visuals and choice making in supporting students. This module specifically teaches how to motivate students using a *First-Then* board. Useful in increasing skill and reducing inappropriate behaviours, a *First-Then* board can be a "go to" tool in your classroom. Listeners will receive a free downloadable .pdf that includes a *First-Then* board template, and a choice board with some generally used icons. A brief Q&A will follow the presentation.

Visuals Module: Task Analysis

This 30-minute focuses on using a task analysis to promote independence of a skill in the classroom. How to develop a task analysis will be demonstrated. Participants will receive a free downloadable pdf of slides and sample visuals. A brief Q&A will follow the presentation.

On Saturday February 20th, the Transition Team in partnership with Surrey Place, *Disability Services Ontario (DSO) and Passport Funding* ran a webinar for parents of adolescents in Multiple Exceptionalities/Developmental Disability (ME/DD) Intensive Support Programs (ISPs) entitled, **Preparing for Life After High School: Transition Workshop**. This webinar was well attended and included presentations from the *Disability Services Ontario (DSO) and Passport Funding*. Parents were provided a link to the Google site, *Preparing For Life After High School*, which includes the resources discussed and the various presentations. <https://sites.google.com/tcdsb.ca/post21parentsite/home>



SPECIAL SERVICES



In the month of February, the Mental Health team engaged in the following activities to support the mental health and well-being of students across the system:

- The Team presented the Student Mental Health Action Kit (<https://smho-smso.ca/covid-19/educators/>) from School Mental Health Ontario (SMHO) to all principals across the system for promotion among educators.
- The Team created a 3-part learning series for new and existing Stop the Stigma Teacher mentors to support them in developing and implementing a Mental Health initiative at their local school this year. To date, there are 73 elementary schools and all 32 secondary schools participating in Stop The Stigma this year. A total of 19 educators and their classrooms from St. Anne Virtual Catholic School are also involved in the campaign this year.
- The Stop the Stigma Symposium will be virtual this year: March 24 AM for elementary students and March 25 PM for secondary students. There will be 3 keynote speakers that speak to our theme: We Become COMPASSIONATE, empowering students with positive messages of resiliency, self-compassion and empathy for others.

Elementary Stop the Stigma Virtual Mental Health Symposium
March 24th 9:45-11:55 AM

WE BECOME COMPASSIONATE!

	As an alum of CBC's Top 35 Canadian Immigrants, Will Shah is a poet and public speaker. He works to inspire thousands to follow his voice, his journey, and his advocacy. Will Shah is the people's messenger. Will has also served his hometown as Poet Laureate for the City of Mississauga. Workshop Description - "RHYTHM & POETRY" Changing the world is a process. One we're all a part of every single day. It is a process that requires all of us to be intentional about choosing action in our daily lives. From standing up to bullying and being an ally, to being responsible and taking ownership for our mistakes, we need to choose action to make a difference. The session will focus on a variety of different stories that speak to character building and resilience aimed at a middle-grade audience. The session will include different musical and poetic messages interspersed with storytelling.
	Tanika Riley aka Night is an energetic storyteller, entrepreneur and artist, with a message of personal wellness through the healing arts & financial empowerment. Tanika was honored in 2020 as one of the 500 Accomplished Black Women in Canada for her 20+ years working in education, community and youth development. Tanika is also the co-founder of FOR AMOR, a multidisciplinary arts and culture organization dedicated to wellness & equity. Workshop Description - Wellness Through the Healing Arts Through stories, videos and creative expression students will have the opportunity to reflect on personal experiences and learn wellness tools such as personal boundaries and self-care. From an inside-out approach, participants will also have the opportunity to learn how awareness, emotions and creativity build compassion and resiliency while writing themselves to navigate the journey of life in a way that honors who they uniquely are.
	Born in El Salvador, Miguel Martinez moved to Canada when he was six years old. In his early years, he worked for McDonald's, representing the perfect across Canada. Miguel is passionate about instilling soft skills at an early age. Miguel has found passion & purpose through dance, laughter, and music - which now serve as cornerstones of his company MTCafe Inc. Workshop Description - "The Power of Music" As we grapple with an ever-changing normal, anxiety can escalate. Students and educators are emotional under challenging times. So how do we deal with these stresses? Through the highly interactive and engaging workshop, participants will discover evidence-based strategies to help develop routines to increase resiliency and boost good mental health.

BONUS Guest artist: Lisa Soria from Think Link

JOIN YOUTUBE LIVE HERE:
<https://youtu.be/3U-dZ-bq3is>

Secondary Stop the Stigma Virtual Mental Health Symposium
March 25th 2:45-4:45 PM

WE BECOME COMPASSIONATE!

	JEFF AD. Martin is a soul-stirring, thought-provoking, highly requested transformational speaker, who has been using his platform to inspire people from around the world, shares his gift of purpose in efforts to help others find their true potential. He is a youth communication specialist, with over 1000 forensic interviews with children. Jeff is also an author of two critically acclaimed books. Workshop Description - "YOU CHOOSE" Jeff reminds us that as tough as life can sometimes be, we always get to choose. No we can't control the weather, the pandemic or how others act, but we can choose how we show up every single day and the compassion that we have for others and even for ourselves. Jeff speaks about the importance of self-compassion, particularly using positive self-affirmations to encourage ourselves. By the end of the talk, you will be reminded of your value, your worth and how important you are to the world.
	Sought after speaker, author, and transformational coach Elizabeth Carriere is an award-winning entrepreneur with an unbelievable story of transformation and a contagious zeal for life. Through trial and triumph, Elizabeth has built her career on her unwavering strength and a strong mission to impact others through her own story. Workshop Description - "THE LIFE CHANGING POWER OF COMPASSION" This presentation will focus on the life changing power of compassion & empathy and how it allows us to step outside of ourselves and see the circumstances of others. The "how" and "why" supply the willpower to do what is necessary to make the world a more caring place. The goal of my presentation is to help students understand how compassion gives us the ability to understand someone else's situation and the desire to take action to improve their lives.
	As an alum of CBC's Top 35 Canadian Immigrants, Will Shah is a poet and public speaker. He works to inspire thousands to follow his voice, his journey, and his advocacy. Will Shah is the people's messenger. Will has also served his hometown as Poet Laureate for the City of Mississauga. Workshop Description - "RHYTHM & POETRY" This presentation requires students and staff to challenge their own bias and learn from their peers. In a world where equity and representation matter more than ever, the conversations we have with students shape future generations. Growing up in a South Asian and immigrant family, Will shares his personal narrative of facing discrimination and prejudice. This keynote presentation encourages students to share their own narrative and be open-minded and embrace the narratives of their peers.

BONUS Guest artist: Lisa Soria from Think Link

JOIN YOUTUBE LIVE HERE:
<https://youtu.be/heGRy-ZtdPI>

- The 6 mental health professionals who support the secondary schools have recently started facilitating student mental health workshops for the entire school. To date this year, they have facilitated 16 mental health workshops in 6 high schools, reaching over 1,700 students overall on topics such as Tips for Stress Management, Gratitude, Strength and Hope.
- On February 12, the Mental Health team in collaboration with Nurturing our Catholic Community department facilitated a half-day professional development on **Faith & Well-Being** for all 4 000 secondary school educators for Leaders of Our Own Learning (LOYOL). We also facilitated a live webinar on SMHO tools and resources for educators.
- The mental health team facilitated student-directed Suicide Awareness course for 24 support staff this month, aiming to reach a total of 100 support staff by the end of this school year.
- The mental health team facilitated a workshop for 50 new educators to convey strategies to help support them with students with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD).