



TCDSB Student Mental Health
and Well-Being Strategy
2015-2018

Mission/Vision

MISSION

The Mental Health Strategy is designed to continue to raise awareness, build capacity, and provide a coordinated and evidence-based/informed, Catholic centered approach to mental health, engaging partners and staff in supporting student mental health and well-being within TCDSB. (This is just my opinion but the font looks better without it being in italics.)

VISION

TCDSB is a school board anchored in Catholic values in which the mental health of children and youth is recognized as a key determinant of well-being and achievement, where children and youth grow to reach their full potential. Every school in the Toronto Catholic District School Board will be a mentally healthy school that demonstrates pervasive caring, and promotes well-being and achievement for students, staff, and our community.

Patricia Marra- Stapleton

Mental Health Leader

Cristina Fernandes,

Superintendent of Student
Achievement and Well-Being
Special Services



TCDSB Student Mental Health and Well-Being Strategy 2015-2018



Executive Summary:

*Whoever suffers from mental illness 'always' bears God's image and likeness in himself, as does every human being. In addition, he 'always' has the inalienable right not only to be considered as an image of God and therefore as a person, but also to be treated as such",
Saint John Paul II, November 1996*

TCDSB is committed to nurturing the relationship between our Catholic Faith and Mental Health. There is much evidence to suggest that one's faith offers a protective factor against mental illness. Living our Catholic Faith teaches us about the compassion and dignity of all persons. Mental health is an integral part of that compassion and dignity. TCDSB maintains a strong reputation among school boards across Ontario, as demonstrating exemplary practices in student mental health, leadership, and student success. We have made a great deal of progress thus far (see Appendix A for details) and we continue to recognise the inextricable link between student mental health and student achievement. This relationship is the foundation for productive, well rounded, contributors of our community. All children have a right to attend school and reach their fullest potential. We need to support the needs of students identified with mental illness as well as provide interventions for students at risk of mental health disorders. This can only be achieved by fostering a climate in our schools, families, and communities which promotes mental health and wellness for all.

The evidence is overwhelming, the path is clear. Through its current strategic directions, the Ministry of Education recognises the importance of students' psychological well-being, as it incorporates "improved student achievement and well-being" into its goals. The Ministry of Education released "Achieving Excellence: a renewed vision for education in Ontario" in 2014. Achieving Excellence highlights 4 goals. Promoting Well-Being is one of the renewed goal areas for Ontario's students.



Guiding Principles

- ❑ Our Catholic values instil a belief in the worth and dignity of every person, that people thrive in a safe, healthy and compassionate environment, and that each of us shares responsibility for creating collaborative communities of learning (TCDSB MYSP)
- ❑ We are committed to the equity and inclusive education of all students. Our Catholic faith rejects injustice and respects the dignity of the person.
- ❑ We are committed to following the mission set out in our Board Learning Improvement Plan (BLIP) which directs us to focus on our Catholic Social Teaching, as well as provincial goals such as “promoting well-being” of all students and enhancing mental and physical health.
- ❑ We continue to recognise the inextricable link between student mental health and student achievement. This relationship is the foundation for productive, well rounded, contributors to our community.
- ❑ All children have a right to attend school and reach their fullest potential.
- ❑ We commit to the continued development of our systems’ capacity to understand and serve each student with a view towards improved mental health and well-being.
- ❑ We will utilize the existing mental health expertise of our Special Services multi-disciplinary team and school based staff in addressing mental health promotion and prevention to the fullest of our capacity.
- ❑ We will focus on the implementation of evidenced based, best practices programs and services for our schools and students.
- ❑ Our community stakeholders in mental health and well-being, Church, and families are our partners in achieving mentally healthy schools across our school board.



TCDSB's 5 Mental Health and Well-Being Priority Areas



Building Foundations

Building Foundations refers to the development of the organizational conditions which are key in the promotion and maintenance of effective school mental health. The foundations range from commitment, to a clear and focused vision, ongoing quality improvement, clear protocols directing our work and care, collaboration, and dedicated staff. TCDSB will continue to focus on the integration of student mental health and well-being into all aspects of school life and improvement. Student mental health and well-being underpins all academic life and achievement.



Developing Skills and Knowledge

TCDSB is committed to the *Developing Skills and Knowledge* of mental health and well-being for and with students, parents, and staff. Our Catholic faith teaches us first and foremost the importance of the dignity of the person as well as compassion for one another. As a community, our school board's mental health and well-being can flourish as we build our awareness and understanding of mental health and well-being.



Supporting Well-Being and Decreasing Stigma

A focus on *Supporting Well-Being and Decreasing Stigma* will promote wellness and help combat the debilitating impact of stigma. Student Mental Health, occurs along a continuum, and our supports reflect that continuum. Acknowledging that physical health and mental health are equally important to overall health and well-being will go a long way to tearing down barriers built by stigma.



Engaging Families

Parents and guardians are an integral part of student well-being and achievement. When families are engaged, students demonstrate increased motivation, higher grades, and better outcomes. Empowering families with knowledge about mental health and well-being encourages better outcomes as well. TCDSB will endeavour to incorporate the family's voice in supporting student mental health.



Partnering with the Community

Student mental health and well-being is a shared responsibility between family, school, church, and community. TCDSB recognises the crucial role and valued expertise, that each contribute. Our community partners in child and youth mental health, and health services are integral to the success and well-being of our students. We will continue to work towards equitable and sustainable community partnerships.

The following pages will expand each of the five Priority areas



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Mental Health is defined as a state of well-being in which every individual realizes his or her own potential, can cope with normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to her or his community.

World Health Organization.

- ❑ Making mental health a targeted area of growth for all TCDSB schools. Assist schools with the development of school mental health plans as part of their Annual School Learning Improvement Plan (SLIP).
- ❑ Incorporating student mental health and well-being into the TCDSB School Effectiveness Framework (SEF). The SEF provides administrators with key things to look for in building effective learning environments.
- ❑ Sharing both provincial and local tools with all school administrators, showcasing best practices.
- ❑ Continuing the development and promotion of evidence based and evidence informed universal mental health classroom practices and programs.





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"Jesus saw her weeping...his heart was touched, and he was deeply moved."

John 11:33

- ❑ Implement and share the Ministry of Education's *Mental Health Resource Guide for Educators Supporting Minds* throughout our board.
- ❑ Create high quality professional development for teachers regarding student mental health and well-being. This will include making links between evidence based mental health programs and the Ontario Curriculum expectations, and classroom practice.
- ❑ Continue to offer suicide awareness workshops to all staff groups by TCDSB social workers and psychology staff. As well, continue to offer Crisis Intervention and Mental Health Crisis Response support to schools as required.
- ❑ Provide support for teachers as they deliver curriculum, specifically the 2014 Health and Physical Education curriculum, particularly as it pertains to mental health and well-being.





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Stigma is a mark of disgrace or discredit that sets a person apart from others. It involves negative stereotypes and prejudice. Stigma results in fear and mistrust of differences....

Mental Health Commission of Canada

- ❑ Implementing and sharing the Ministry of Education’s *Mental Health Resource Guide for Educators: Supporting Minds* board wide will help support awareness of the mental health continuum and increase understanding of the struggles facing some of our students.
- ❑ Continuing TCDSB’s student leadership initiative “Stop the Stigma” at all secondary schools. The “Stop the Stigma” will be developed and promoted at the elementary school level, as well.
- ❑ Including the *TCDSB Mental-Health-Policy* in our mental health response guidelines which direct the care and support of school board mental health support and services to all students. Evidence based individual and group prevention and intervention is available from TCDSB Psychology and Social Work staff.
- ❑ Providing many resources for teachers, students, and parents to better understand child and youth mental health, on The *TCDSB Mental Health and Well-Being Website*.
- ❑ Continuing the important work of supporting TCDSB staff well-being through the exploration and development of staff mental health promotion and prevention initiatives.



Engaging Families

Parents and guardians are an integral part of student well-being and achievement. When *families are engaged*, students demonstrate increased motivation, higher grades, and better outcomes. Empowering families with knowledge about mental health and well-being encourages better outcomes, as well. TCDSB will endeavor to incorporate the family's voice in supporting student mental health .

When parents are engaged and included, everyone benefits, and our schools become increasingly rich and positive places to teach, learn, and grow.

Supporting the Ontario Leadership Strategy, 2012, p. 1

- ❑ Maintain a balanced perspective between a student centred as well as family-centred approaches to child and youth mental health and well-being, an approach that takes into consideration the rights and needs of all.
- ❑ Enhance the parent representatives' role on the Mental Health Advisory Council as liaisons to other parent groups.
- ❑ Expand the TCDSB Mental Health webpage and Parent Resource link to include helpful tips and videos for parents. [Mental Health Resources-Parents](#)
- ❑ Explore and develop mechanisms to exchange ideas regarding student mental health and well-being with TCDSB parents.
- ❑ Develop and implement a specific communications strategy directed at reaching and involving parents and families.



Partnering with the Community

Student mental health and well-being is a shared responsibility between family, school, church, and community. TCDSB recognises the crucial role and valued expertise, that each contribute. *Our community partners* in child and youth mental health, and health services are integral to the success and well-being of our students. We will continue to work towards equitable and sustainable community partnerships.

One of the marvelous things about community is that it enables us to welcome and help people in a way we couldn't as individuals. When we pool our strength and share the work and responsibility, we can welcome many people, even those in deep distress, and perhaps help them find self-confidence and inner healing.

Jean Vanier, Community and Growth

- ❑ Expand our education of our Catholic Faith Community regarding the mental health needs and concerns of our students.
- ❑ Continue to work with the Ministry of Health and Long Term Care and their Mental Health and Addiction Nurses for schools program (MHAN). This program connects TCDSB students and families with critical mental health needs to much needed services and consultation.
- ❑ Continue to partner with the Ministry of Child and Youth Services on the Priority Access Counselling program, connecting TCDSB students and families with critical mental health needs to priority counseling.
- ❑ Enhance both internal and external dialogues pertaining to facilitating pathways to, through, and from care mental health service for students and families.
- ❑ Increase the development of Partnerships with local Children's Mental Health Agencies and Services ([LINK](#) to list of current partners).



Student Mental Health and Self-Being Steering Committee 2014-2015 (Contributing Members)

Patricia Marra- Stapleton	Mental Health Leader (Chair)
Frank Piddisi	Superintendent of Student Achievement and Well-Being Special Services
Paula Antinucci	Assessment and Programming Teacher
Lynn Burke	Assessment and Programming Teacher
Dr. Rosalina De Sa–Maini	School Psychologist
Nelli Domingues	Physical Education and Outdoor Education Resource Teacher
Odette Fernandes	School Social Worker
Carmela Giardini	Coordinator Pathways and Guidance
Sheila Gilkinson	Student Success Resource Teacher
Iwona Kaczmarzyk-Kozlowski	Psychological Associate
Marcia King	Social Worker – Safe Schools
Dr. Maria Kokai	Chief Psychologist
Rose Lenardon	Guidance Resource Teacher
Trish McLean	School Social Worker, Safe Schools
Anne–Marie Muir	Elementary Principal
Tracey Parish	Secondary Principal, Expelled Pupil Program
Amy Shannon	Care and Treatment Teacher
John Wilhelm	Chief Social Worker
John Wujek	Secondary Principal Monsignor Fraser Campuses

TORONTO CATHOLIC DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD TRUSTEES 2015-2016

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| 4. Patrizia Bottoni | 12. Nancy Crawford, Vice-Chair |
| 5. Maria Rizzo | Karina Dubrovskaya |
| 6. Frank D'Amico | Allison Gacad |
| 7. Michael Del Grande, Chair | Student Trustees |
| 8. Garry Tanuan | |



Progress Thus Far

2012-15 TCDSB Mental Health and Well-Being Strategy Goal Area	PROGRESS
<p>Developing the Organisational Conditions needed to support out Mental Health Strategy</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ TCDSB MH Steering Committee (interdisciplinary staff committee), formed in 2012, continues to implement TCDSB Mental Health Strategy. ■ TCDSB Mental Health Advisory Council (MHAC) formed Jan. 2013. Includes all collective bargaining units, trustee, parents, students, and community. ■ TCDSB Mental health Response Guidelines, and Suicide Intervention Guidelines approved Jan. 2013 ■ TCDSB Mental Health and Well-Being policy (S.03) (incorporating guidelines) approved June 2013. ■ Presentation of “ TCDSB: Journey To Wellness” video explaining Mental Health Policy S.03 to all 200 TCDSB Schools completed June 2014
<p>Raising Educator, Staff, student and parent awareness of Mental health thereby building capacity and decreasing stigma.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ TCDSB/SSLI Mental Health PD offered to many staff groups Spring 2012-2013 ■ All Secondary Schools and some pilot elementary schools involved with the Stop the Stigma Student Leadership initiative. This includes many presentations/ seminars for students, staff, and parents. ■ Parent mental health information sessions at secondary schools, as well as presentations for parent fairs such as CPIC (Catholic Parent Involvement Council) and Special Services Parent Fair. ■ Many live experience presentations by those recovering and striving with mental illness, for secondary students. ■ Presentation of Mental Health Literacy Curriculum (by Social Work, Psychology, and Guidance) to all 32 Secondary School Staff groups. 2012-2013 ■ Presentation of “ TCDSB : Journey To Wellness” video explaining MH Policy S.03 (by SW, Psych, and Guidance) to all 200 TCDSB Schools completed June 2014

2012-15 TCDSB Mental Health and Well-Being Strategy Goal Area	PROGRESS
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ All TCDSB School Social Workers, and School Psychology staff, and some Guidance staff trained in ASIST (Applied Suicide Intervention Training) fall 2012-Spring 2014. ■ Over 450 TCDSB staff(teachers, EAs, CYWs, Administrators) Trained in <i>safe TALK</i>(Suicide Awareness) Fall 2013-June 2015 ■ Numerous mental health classroom and staff presentations (promotion and prevention) conducted by TCDSB School Social Workers and Psychology Staff. This includes presentations on MOE "Supporting Minds".
<p>Implementing Evidence Informed (EI) and Evidence Based (EB) MH promotion, prevention and intervention strategies and programs in both elementary and secondary schools.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Through consultation with CASEL (Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning) data base as well as the Ontario Centres for Excellence, a Mental Health Steering Committee workgroup developed a directory of EI/EB programs/ resources available to teacher's k-12, 2013-14. This information was posted to the TCDSB portal in fall 2014. ■ TCDSB School Social Workers and Psychology Staff provided numerous group and individual counselling sessions during the school year.
<p>Establishing key working relationships and protocols with our community stakeholders in coordinating school based MH efforts.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Established a Partnership Agreement with TC-CCAC (Toronto Central Community Care Access Centre) the Mental Health and Addictions Nurses Program (Jan. 2013). ■ TCDSB acted as leader in the collaboration with both Toronto English School Boards, and two Toronto French School Boards as well as TC-CCAC in devising a joint proposal for transition of students to and from Hospital ER/Psychiatry. ■ As of June 2015 Developed and maintained 11 separate partnership agreements with children's mental health agencies. TCDSB represented on various community council and expert panels including Toronto Suicide Prevention Strategy, MHLTC Toronto Child and Family Network 0-6 years, MCYS " Together to Mobilize", MYCS " Together to Live", TCDSB Psychology and Social Work staff presented at a variety of Provincial Mental Health Conferences.