Mental health matters: SCDSB supports positive mental health
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In 2011, the Ontario government began to focus on a plan to improve the mental health of all Ontarians. Open Minds Healthy Minds is the ten year government strategy regarding mental health & well-being in Ontario. The first three years have been focused on children and youth. The established priorities are: to provide fast access to high quality service; early identification and intervention with children and youth who are experiencing mental health concerns; and to close critical service gaps, especially in rural communities.

The SCDSB Mental Health and Addictions strategy is aligned with Open Minds, Healthy Minds and with The Simcoe Path. The Board recognizes the importance of mental health as it is linked to overall well-being, achievement and positive outcomes for youth. We are committed to continually improving the quality of mental health support available to our students.

The SCDSB has a Mental Health Leader who is responsible for the development and implementation of the Mental Health and Addictions Strategy. The Mental Health Leader works closely with the Mental Health Steering Committee to set key priorities regarding the implementation of universal promotion and prevention programs, evidence-based resources as well as targeted interventions that aim to increase mental health awareness, literacy and expertise. The Mental Health Leader also works closely with community agencies to coordinate the development and delivery of services in our schools.
VISION

The SCDSB nurtures positive mental health and holistic growth, which enables everyone to flourish.

VALUES

The Simcoe County District School Board is committed to creating opportunities for well-being and achievement. We value collaboration and shared responsibility with students, parents and community partners to create a culture of inclusivity, empathy and respect such that everyone can be resilient and thrive.

MISSION

The Simcoe County District School Board will promote positive mental health in our schools by increasing awareness, literacy and expertise within our system.

We will develop increased capacity to recognize and intervene effectively for students who are struggling with mental health concerns such that they become connected with the appropriate supports in a timely manner.

We will work collaboratively with community partners to implement a range of evidence-based supports and interventions to meet the needs of our students.

MENTAL HEALTH - MENTAL ILLNESS CONTINUUM

Health

Mild to moderate distress
Mild or temporary impairment

MENTAL HEALTH - MENTAL ILLNESS CONTINUUM

Well-being
Mild to moderate distress
Mild or temporary impairment

Health
Mental Health is fluid. Most people fluctuate on the continuum. How we are able to cope with stressors and challenges depends on our state of well-being at any one point in time.

**WHAT IS MENTAL HEALTH**

Mental health is a state of well-being that helps individuals reach their potential. When we have positive mental health, we can cope with the normal stresses of life, work productively and make contributions to our communities.

**WHAT ARE MENTAL HEALTH PROBLEMS**

Mental health problems cause difficulties with social, emotional physical and cognitive functioning, but are not so severe that they meet the criteria for mental illness. As many as one in five children or youth struggle with mental health problems that create difficulty with their ability to function.

**WHAT IS MENTAL ILLNESS**

The Public Health Agency of Canada defines mental illness as changes in a person’s thinking, mood or behavior that are also associated with significant distress or impaired functioning. Mental illness can result from a complex interaction of genetic, biological, personality and environmental factors. Mental illnesses affect people of all ages, education levels, income levels and cultures.
Resilience refers to an ability to cope with problems and set-backs that happen as a natural part of life. Resilient people are able to utilize their skills and strengths to cope and recover from problems and challenges.

There are many ways we can promote positive mental health and resilience. People can learn how to become more resilient as they grow and develop. There are certain characteristics and circumstances that help to improve a person’s ability to be resilient:

- Healthy sleep habits
- Healthy eating habits
- Exercise
- Connection with the community, a sense of belonging
- Participation in music, sports, art or activities you enjoy
- Friends and family that are positive, supportive and loving
- Positive school experiences and connections
- Positive self-esteem
- Cultural or spiritual connections
- Skills related to communicating, problem-solving
- Social and emotional skills
MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORTS IN THE BOARD

SCDSB recognizes that a person’s mental health and well-being is connected with their ability to learn, maintain social relationships and to reach their full potential. We provide a variety of mental health resources in terms of staff, services and information to support our students in achieving their goals and reaching their full potential.

PSYCHOLOGISTS

Students with mental health issues that affect learning are eligible for psychological assessment services. Such services support the diagnoses of mental health disorders as well as identifying the students’ strengths and needs. Suggestions for programming initiatives that enable educators to support students and provide instruction for social-emotional learning skills are emphasized in these assessment reports. Psychological consultation services are also available to schools. Consultations are time-limited and focus on characterizing the student’s needs and the development of a plan to meet such needs. In the case of both assessments and consultations, psychologists also make recommendations to support accessing appropriate community and medical support services. SCDSB psychological services work closely with other sources of mental health supports (i.e. social workers, special education consultants, child and youth workers, school teachers and administrators, superintendents) as a part of a team to ensure support is coordinated and complimentary.
SOCIAL WORKERS
SCDSB recognizes that a student’s ability to learn can be impacted by a number of emotional, behavioural and/or mental health concerns. Social workers can provide assessment and short-term support to students, their families, schools and communities related to positive mental health and well-being. They provide individual and group therapeutic interventions related to helping students reach their full potential. Social workers can also provide crisis intervention, advocacy, consultation for school staff or families and professional development within the board to help increase awareness and literacy.

CHILD & YOUTH WORKERS
Social-emotional learning is linked to improving positive mental health outcomes for students. Child and Youth Workers facilitate the strengthening of social-emotional skills through individual and group support and structured interactions. They can also provide information and support to the school team regarding universal social-emotional learning programs and strategies that can help to create increased awareness, responsiveness and support for all students.

FIRST NATION METIS & INUIT STUDENT ADVISORS
First Nation, Metis & Inuit (FNMI) Student Advisors work closely with FNMI students and families to identify and support the social, emotional, intellectual, cultural and physical well-being of students. Having FNMI student support staff in schools has been identified as a best practice to increase achievement and well-being of FNMI students. FNMI Student Advisors provide support to individuals and/or groups and also assist school staff in coordination of classroom activities or with community agencies such as the Friendship Centers and Enahtig Healing Lodge.

MENTAL HEALTH AND ADDICTION NURSES
Central Community Care Access (CCAC) nurses are available to provide short-term mental health and addiction supports and services as a part of
the SCDSB school inter-disciplinary team. In addition to providing care to students with mild to complex mental health and/or substance use issues, the nurses provide support in transitioning students back to school following a hospitalization. These specially trained nurses ensure that students are connected to supports within the school as well as referred to available community supports. The Mental Health and Addiction Nurses team works with the SCDSB staff to enable students to develop and maintain healthy life skills and resiliency as they move through their school years into adulthood.

STUDENT SUCCESS SCHOOL TEAMS
Student Success teams consist of Administrators, Guidance Counsellors, Elementary and Secondary Student Success Teachers, Special Education Resource Teachers and regular classroom teachers who support student achievement and personal wellness within the academic, personal and social realms of the school community. Students can receive support regarding decision-making, problem solving, conflict resolution, stress and time management and relationship awareness, along with individual education/career life pathway planning.

ATTENDANCE COUNSELLORS
Attendance Counsellors work with children of compulsory school age who are habitually absent or refusing to attend school. They provide professional intervention within the schools they service and within the homes of the families they assist. Since school attendance difficulties are often a manifestation of serious issues including mental health and addiction, they provide individual and family support around these issues and share community resources. They assist in building relationships with school personnel, community agencies and most importantly, with their referred students and their families. As their advocates they endeavour to better understand the issues affecting school attendance. They also work hard at finding ‘lost students’ and re-introducing them to the opportunities an education system can provide.
COMPASS is a network of Community School Teams across Simcoe County. COMPASS Community School Teams link schools (elementary and secondary) with local providers of community supports and services including: child and youth mental health, parenting supports, child protection, health, youth justice, community recreation and more.

COMPASS provides an opportunity for schools and community partners to draw on the expertise and resources that exist in local communities and to collaboratively identify and address issues affecting children, youth, families, schools and communities.

Elementary and secondary schools looking for community supports to enhance student learning, support healthy child/youth development and reduce social, emotional or behavioural challenges within the school.

There are eight COMPASS Community School Teams across Simcoe County: Angus, Barrie, Georgian West, Innisfil, North Simcoe, Orillia and South West Simcoe and a Francophone COMPASS serving Simcoe County.
MENTAL HEALTH COMMUNITY SUPPORTS

Kids Help Phone 1-800-668-6868
Mobile Crisis Line – Simcoe County 1-888-893-8333
Mobile Crisis Line – South Simcoe 1-905-310-COPE
Kinark 1-888-454-6275
Newpath 1-866-566-7656
Canadian Mental Health & Addictions 1-800-461-4319
Barrie Area Native Advisory Circle 1-705-734-1818
Barrie Native Friendship Centre 1-705-721-7689

You can also access the 211 directory by phone (dial 2-1-1) or online at www.211ontario.ca to request information on community resources related to a specific concern.

WEB-BASED MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT AND INFORMATION

Child Youth and Family Coalition of Simcoe County
ABC’s of Mental Health
Public Health Agency of Canada
Mind your Mind
Speak Up
Mental Health Works
Mind Matters
Family Mental Health Initiative