

# SECTION J: MENTAL HEALTH AND ADDICTIONS STRATEGY

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# Mental Health & Well-Being In Ontario

## Ontario Mental Health and Addiction Strategy: Open Minds Healthy Minds (OMHM)

Open Minds Healthy Minds a mental health strategy for the province of Ontario launched in June 2011. It is through the vision of OMHM that school boards in Ontario were funded with mental health leaders.

### OMHM Vision

An Ontario where every person enjoys good mental health and well-being throughout their lifetime, and where all Ontarians with mental illness or addictions can recover and participate in welcoming, supportive communities.

### OMHM Mission

To reduce the burden of mental illness and addictions by ensuring that all Ontarians have timely access to an integrated system of excellent, coordinated and efficient promotion, prevention, early intervention, community support and treatment programs. (OMHM pg. 7)

The OMHM goal that impacts mental health work in schools is ***Building school-based capacity***.

For children and youth, the first signs that they are struggling with mental health issues may be at school – in the form of changes in behaviour, an inability to focus, or a drop in their marks. To help schools and teachers see those first signs and act, we will:

- Implement mental health literacy and cross-sectoral training on early identification and intervention for educators;
- Implement programs through schools and community-based agencies to enable early identification and referral for treatment;
- Enhance mental health resources in schools.

(OMHM Pg. 14)

# Mental Health & Well-Being in PDSB

## PDSB Mental Health Strategy

The Peel District School Board is committed to promoting positive mental health for all students. The intention of the Mental Health Strategy is to articulate an action plan that will meet the mental health needs of all students. It is a working document that will be continually refined based on the Board's understanding of student mental health needs.

## PDSB Vision

The Peel District School Board will provide a comprehensive mental health strategy for all students that promotes positive mental health, creates a culture of caring and empathy regarding mental health, enables all stakeholders to collaborate with community partners in a coordinated, responsive and effective manner.

## PDSB Mission

The Mental Health Strategy will guide the Peel District School Board to promote system awareness of mental health needs, supports and services; to build capacity among students, staff and parents to promote positive student mental health; and to collaborate with community partners to provide coordinated timely support for students and their families.

## Values/Commitments

Students need support and guidance from caring adults in their families, at school and in their communities. These include ongoing secure relationships with parents as well as formal and informal relationships with teachers, mentors, coaches, peers, youth volunteers and community members. Ensuring positive student mental health is a shared responsibility of students, parents, community partners and all staff. The Peel District School Board will de-stigmatize mental health and promote a culture of support and caring regarding student mental health. We respect and value our diverse communities and seek to understand and support their unique needs. Collaboration is the key to our work; as we develop and implement our mental health strategy, we will involve all stakeholders and communicate clearly our collaborative action plan.

## PDSB Mental Health Strategy Priorities 2012-2017

- To actively promote mental health awareness and decrease stigma across our system.
- To promote a broad understanding of suicide prevention, intervention and post-vention.
- To develop a deeper understanding of what mental health means in the diverse groups in our community.
- Continue to promote/deepen our collaborative working relationships.
- Increase our system's responsiveness to mental health needs

## Structures Supporting the PDSB Mental Health Strategy

- School Mental Health ASSIST is a provincial implementation support team designed to help Ontario school boards to promote student mental health and well-being, through leadership, practical resources and systematic research-based approaches to school mental health.
- Mental Health Steering Committee, comprised of system leaders responsible for designing and leading the work of the mental health strategy.
- Mental Health Priority Groups, comprised of all stakeholder groups within the PDSB, responsible for creating resources for the five priority areas.
- Mental Health Strategic Planning Advisory Committee, comprised of internal and external stakeholders, responsible for advising on the creation of a data collection tool for system mapping and advising on priorities for the second phase of the mental health strategy.

## Student Mental Health, Well-Being

At the Peel District School Board, we are committed to the well-being, safety and success of all of our students. Our schools, teachers and administrators do our part to help every student develop healthy relationships, make good choices and provide support inside and outside the classroom. We do all we can to ensure students are cared for including care for their mental health.

We ask you to join us in supporting students to be resilient and enjoy good well-being.

## Our Team Approach

We believe in a team approach to supporting students and know that collaboration leads to better support plans for our students. With these beliefs in mind, we encourage all parents and educators to come together for a conversation when they find themselves concerned about a student.

# Resources

## Mental Health Resources For Parents

Children and youth can experience mental health problems that range from mild to serious. As a parent or guardian, you are well-positioned to observe changes in your child's behaviour. It is often difficult to understand what the changes mean.

Parents may wonder if it is a stage that their child or teen is going through. When a problem lasts more than a few weeks, and interferes with his or her daily life it has become a concern that requires further help.

Getting help can be overwhelming for many families. It may be helpful to start with people who know your child or teen:

- Educators are well-positioned to partner with you and to share what they notice during the time that your child or teen is at school. All schools have assigned to them psycho-educational consultants, social workers and speech and language pathologists who you may access through your school's principal or vice-principal.
- Guidance counsellors, teachers and administrators are also there to help support students who may be experiencing difficulty or who are struggling.
- Your family doctor or pediatrician can ensure that there is not a medical cause for the behaviour you are observing. They may also be able to refer you on to resources in the community for additional support.
- Faith-based supports may also be available at your place of worship.

### Website resources

Families may wish to gather information about the concern they are experiencing by going online. The following websites provide information about student mental health and well-being:

[Community Information Partners Peel](#)  
[inURhead](#)  
[Ydie.ca](#)  
[The ABCs of mental health](#)  
[Teen Mental Health](#)  
[eMental Health](#)  
[Kids Help Phone](#)  
[Centre for Addiction and Mental Health \(CAMH\)](#)  
[Mind check](#)  
<http://cmho.org/>

[Anxiety BC](#)  
[Mind your mind](#)  
[Caring for Kids \(Canadian Paediatric Society\)](#)

## Mental Health Resources For Staff

### What are child and youth mental health problems?

Children and youth can experience mental health problems that range from mild to serious. For instance, some students in your class may have a little anxiety when they are facing a test, while others may be very anxious about the same test. When a problem lasts more than a few weeks, and interferes with the student's daily life, then it becomes a concern that requires further help. We all have a role to play in helping our students.

#### Take time to:

- observe change in behaviour that cause concern
- document the frequency, duration, and intensity of the behaviours that are causing concern
- share these observations with others (teaching partner, ISSP, school success, contact, guidance counsellor, administrator) who can help you develop a plan to understand and manage the behaviours – a team approach also includes parents/guardians

Sometimes this will be all you need. Together, you will develop an understanding of the challenges that a student is experiencing and strategies will be developed to support the student to cope. In other instances, you may need to take further action.

#### Next steps

- The school team may decide that it would be helpful to seek the support of the In School Resource Committee (ISRC).
- The ISRC is comprised of the in school team as well as a special education resource teacher, social worker, speech and language pathologist and psycho-educational consultant.
- Each school has their own process for referral to the ISRC. Your administrator or ISSP will guide you.
- With parent permission, the student's strengths and challenges are discussed along with the strategies that have been implemented to date.
- Recommendations will be made by the ISRC members, which may include a referral to one of the PSSP members, case conference, teaching strategies and/or referral to a community partner.
- Recommendations are followed up on, observation and documentation of the frequency, duration and intensity of the concerns continues.
- The ISRC welcomes return visits for further support, if needed.

## Website resources

The following websites may be helpful as you search out strategies and information to support student well-being:

[Ministry of Education - Supporting Healthy Minds - An Educator's Guide to Promoting Students' Mental Health and Well-Being](#)

[Community Information Partners Peel](#)

[The ABCs of mental health](#)

[Teen Mental Health](#)

[Kids Help Phone](#)

[eMental Health](#)

[Anxiety BC](#)

[Kids have Stress Tool – link below](#)

[https://www.google.ca/search?q=Kids+have+Stress+too&sourceid=ie7&rls=com.microsoft:en-US:IE-Address&ie=&oe=&safe=active&gws\\_rd=cr&ei=KWHiWMLtFYqpjwSL7LiwBg#spf=1](https://www.google.ca/search?q=Kids+have+Stress+too&sourceid=ie7&rls=com.microsoft:en-US:IE-Address&ie=&oe=&safe=active&gws_rd=cr&ei=KWHiWMLtFYqpjwSL7LiwBg#spf=1)

## Mental Health Resources For Students

Our staff of committed, dedicated and caring people are well-qualified to support all students. We encourage students to self-advocate—to reach out to an adult that they trust at school or at home—if they find themselves overwhelmed or discouraged. We are open to hearing students' concerns and will help to ensure the appropriate supports are put in place.

If you are a student who is experiencing difficulty or who is struggling, please contact your guidance counsellor, teacher, vice-principal or principal.

## Website resources

[Community Information Partners Peel](#)

[inURhead](#)

[Ydie.ca](#)

[The ABCs of mental health](#)

[Teen Mental Health](#)

[eMental Health](#)

[Kids Help Phone](#)

[Centre for Addiction and Mental Health \(CAMH\)](#)

[Mind check](#)

<http://cmho.org/> Children's Mental Health Ontario

[Anxiety BC](#)

[Mind your mind](#)

[Caring for Kids \(Canadian Pediatrics Society\)](#)

## OMHM Community Partnerships

### Mental Health and Addiction Nurses

#### **How will the Mental Health and Addiction Nurses (MHAN) support students?**

*Working in close collaboration with teachers and other key partners, the MHAN team will:*

- Help students transition from the hospital, emergency department and reintegrate back into school life
- Assist in recognizing, responding to and supporting students in their early struggles with mental health and addictions
- Collaborate with other professionals to provide services and supports
- Assist students, families and schools in understanding medical care plans and medication reconciliation when required.

#### **Ministry of Children and Youth Services funded agencies, Peel Children's Centre and Associated Youth Services of Peel**

- Both agencies provide direct services to students and families following a referral by social work or psychological services.