



Exploring Mental Health Together: Resources for parents and caregivers

Learning about mental health at school can help students to build skills and habits that promote well-being. It can also assist with managing stress, recognizing signs of common mental health problems, and knowing where and how to seek help if support is needed. As your child learns through the Ministry of Education's Mental Health Literacy Modules for grades 7 and 8, you can learn along with them and find helpful tips on how to maintain positive mental health and well-being for your child.


At School Mental Health Ontario, we provide Ontario-made, accessible, evidence- and experience-informed resources to support student mental health. On the [School Mental Health Ontario](https://www.smho-smso.ca) website, you will find information about mental health, substance use, and school mental health in Ontario.

This resource list for parents and caregivers is designed to complement the learning your child will receive through the Ministry of Education's Modules.


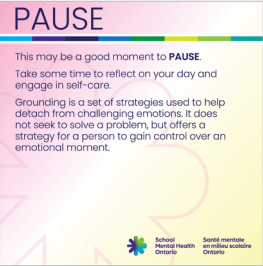
Are there activities we can practise at home?

Finding ways to help your child manage stress or support them in developing a range of social and emotional skills (e.g., identifying their emotions, working through conflict, problem-solving, etc.) can better prepare them to deal with life's challenges. **Practising skills before we need them is the best way to prepare and increases the likelihood that these skills and strategies will work when your child needs them most.**

Here is a resource that might help to inspire some ideas to try at home:

RESOURCES	
	<h3><u>Easy and Fun Mental Health Activities for Home</u></h3> <p>This is a series of 12 mental health activities designed for parents and caregivers to try at home with their child.</p>

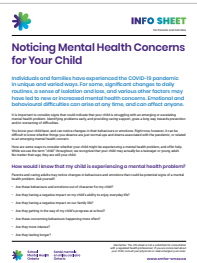


RESOURCES	
 <p>STOP NEGATIVE SELF TALK</p> <p>S <i>Stop!</i> - When you have a negative thought, STOP and give yourself a moment to address the thought.</p> <p>O <i>Observe</i> - Reflect on what you're saying. Think about where your thoughts are coming from.</p> <p>S <i>Shift</i> - Replace the thought with something positive. Shift your thinking.</p> <p><i>Repeat this every time you have a recurring negative thought.</i></p>	<p><u>Mental Health Literacy and Anxiety Management Social Media Bundles</u></p> <p>Youth-friendly exercises and videos on anxiety management such as breathing strategies, visualizations, muscle relaxation, and more.</p>
 <p>PAUSE</p> <p>This may be a good moment to PAUSE. Take some time to reflect on your day and engage in self-care.</p> <p>Grounding is a set of strategies used to help detach from challenging emotions. It does not seek to solve a problem, but offers a strategy for a person to gain control over an emotional moment.</p> <p>School Mental Health Ontario Santé mentale en milieu scolaire Ontario</p>	<p><u>Grounding Techniques Social Media Bundles</u></p> <p>Youth friendly ideas for settling your mind when feeling overwhelmed.</p>

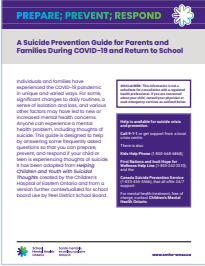
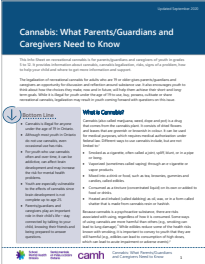
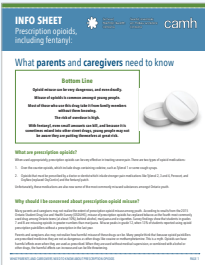


Ask your child about what they learned in the mental health learning modules and try out some of the activities they describe!

Where can I learn more?

We all want our children to feel mentally well, grow up happy, and learn to navigate life's challenges. Knowing what to do if your child needs support can be difficult, so we've pulled together these resources to help you. Your understanding of mental health is valuable to your child's well-being. Below, you'll find resources that support your learning about how to notice mental health concerns, understanding substance use, suicide prevention and how to respond appropriately to your child's mental health needs.

RESOURCES	
 <p>INFO SHEET</p> <p>Noticing Mental Health Concerns for Your Child</p> <p>Individuals can be affected in a number of ways by the COVID-19 pandemic in unique and sometimes, for some, significant changes to daily routines, a sense of isolation, and various other factors may have led to new or increased mental health concerns. Emotional and behavioural difficulties can arise at any time, and can affect anyone.</p> <p>It is important to remember that you are not alone in noticing or experiencing something that may be a sign of a mental health concern. If you notice something that may be a sign of a mental health concern, it is important to talk to your child's healthcare provider or a mental health professional for more information and support.</p> <p>How would I know that my child is experiencing a mental health problem?</p> <p>Some signs and symptoms that may indicate a mental health concern include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Not being able to concentrate or pay attention - Not being able to sleep or having trouble sleeping - Not being able to get up in the morning - Not being able to go to school - Not being able to do things they used to enjoy - Not being able to talk to you about their feelings - Not being able to talk to you about their thoughts - Not being able to talk to you about their feelings - Not being able to talk to you about their thoughts <p>School Mental Health Ontario Santé mentale en milieu scolaire Ontario</p>	<p><u>Noticing Mental Health Concerns for Your Child</u></p> <p>This info sheet explores what parents and caregivers may notice if their child might be experiencing a mental health problem and how to access help.</p>



RESOURCES	
	<p><u>Prepare, Prevent, Respond</u></p> <p>This guide is designed to help by answering some frequently asked questions so that you can prepare, prevent, and respond if your child is experiencing thoughts of suicide.</p>
	<p><u>Cannabis: What Parents and Caregivers Need to Know</u></p> <p>This info sheet contains facts on cannabis, information on cannabis legalization, the health and social effects of cannabis use on children and youth, as well as where to find support and additional information.</p>
	<p><u>Prescription Opioids, Including Fentanyl: What Parents and Caregivers Need To Know</u></p> <p>This info sheet explains what opioids and fentanyl are, provides tips on substance use prevention, intervening if you have concerns, directions on how to respond in crisis situations, and where to find help for your child.</p>
	<p><u>Vaping: What you and your friends need to know</u></p> <p>This resource is designed for students, but can be informative for parents and caregivers too, and may be a good conversation starter.</p>
	<p><u>Helping Your Child Manage Digital Technology</u></p> <p>This resource provides information on how to know if your child's screen time is problematic and provides supports if you are concerned.</p>



There are other reputable Canadian organizations with evidence-informed information for parents and caregivers. For example:

- [About Kids' Health / Sick Kids](#)
- [Anxiety Canada](#)
- [Canadian Mental Health Association – Ontario Division](#)
- [Children's Mental Health Ontario Family Resource Hub](#)
- [Family Smart](#)
- [Kids Help Phone](#)
- [Wellness Together Canada](#)

