

Children's Mental Health Awareness Week 2024!

Within, Between & Around Us

Children's Mental Health Awareness Week and Beyond Toolkit

Check
back
regularly
for
updates!



Dear Families,

As we move through the school year's remaining months, we pause to acknowledge the many realities that impact our day-to-day experiences and mental health. We acknowledge that many feel a sense of being stretched thin and tired, among other feelings. These realities, thoughts and feelings are valid and important. As such, this resource has been carefully created in hopes of not adding to, but complementing the routines and at-home wellness practices. We collaborated with York Region Public Health, Healthy Schools, and Staff Wellness to create a resource that we hope will create opportunities for joy and wellness.

At the YRDSB, we recently launched the [Student Mental Health and Addictions Strategy](#). It highlights a holistic approach to Mental Health encompassing many factors, including but not limited to mental and physical health. [How we think and feel about ourselves and the world can directly impact our physical and mental health](#). To care for ourselves, our children and our families, we must center and incorporate wellness and health practices that speak to who we are and our identity. There are many ways to be healthy and promote mental health. This calendar aims to provide resources and opportunities that support positive mental health through **small and intentional actions**.

A few tips to support caregiver wellness! From the [Take Care of Yourself](#) resource

We encourage you to use the hashtags below to share how your family is acknowledging Children's Mental Health Awareness Week or using the toolkit

#WBA , #withinbetweenaround, #YRDSB, #CMHAW2024 #MHYRDSB,

Share with us on Twitter and Instagram @MH_YRDSB

This toolkit includes

- 1) [Community workshops and resources](#)
- 2) Five themes supported by various resources that support health/mental health and well-being while promoting **Within, Between & Around Us** and **small** and **intentional** actions that support positive mental health.
- 3) We invite you to consider how to use these resources to best support you and your family.

Helpful considerations include:

- We recognize how busy things may be, and sometimes it may be difficult to find the time to engage in some of the offerings listed in this toolkit. We encourage you to consider how this resource may fit into your day-to-day routines or help create new ones
- These opportunities are structured to allow you/your family to tailor the experience (use what fits best for you). Make this calendar and the accompanying resources your own. Use what works on the days that best fit. For example, if a resource for Wednesday better suits Monday, then use it on Monday.

Toolkit Instructions

Included are five themes supported by ready-to-use activities that can be practiced at home and in other environments. These activities promote positive mental health through **small** and **intentional** actions. Each theme and accompanying resource can be tailored to fit the needs of you and your circle of care or family.

Themes:

- [Mindful Mondays](#)
- [Thoughtful Tuesdays](#)
- [Wellness Wednesdays](#)
- [Take Care Thursdays](#)
- [Focus Friday](#)

Mindful Mondays!

Mindful Mondays!



The above [image](#) can provide a great conversation starter when speaking to your child(ren)

During Mindful Mondays; we invite you to do **One Small Thing** – Practice being mindful or in the moment. Slow things down by pausing, reflecting and being present in the moment.

[Combining sensory processes with mindfulness](#) can be especially beneficial for children and youth with unique gifts, abilities and needs.

Try and explore!

Get mindful about feelings using these [Feelings Flashcards](#)

Don't have a printer at home? Double the fun by creating your own flashcards. Use old newspapers, flyers, magazines or pictures to make your own flashcards.

[Ukulele relaxation](#)



Being mindful can look, feel and sound different for each of us.

Tell us how you practice mindfulness!

You can find us on X (formerly twitter) and Instagram @MH_YRDSB

Use the following hashtags on Twitter!

#MHYRDSB #WBA
#withinbetweenaround
#YRDSB #CMHAW2023

Thoughtful Tuesdays!

Thoughtful Tuesday!



The above [image](#) can provide a great conversation starter when speaking to your child(ren) about the power of their thoughts.

Thoughtful Tuesdays invite us to focus on the power of our thoughts. Our thoughts, feelings, and actions are all connected. Understanding this connection is an essential part of developing effective coping skills.

[Awareness of our breath](#) can soothe the nervous system, relieve anxiety, release tension and improve overall health and well-being. This skill can be especially beneficial to children with unique gifts, abilities and needs. We can promote breath awareness to slow things down to be more thoughtful.

Try and explore!

Engage in small and thoughtful actions:

- **Acknowledge** feelings and experiences
- **Smile:** A simple smile can make a difference in someone's day and yours
- **Share** thoughtful notes/ texts
- **Give** your full attention

Explore this [Youth-focused mental health resource hub](#)

to learn more about the connection between thoughts, feelings and actions

Being thoughtful can look, feel and sound different for each of us.

Tell us how you practice being thoughtful!

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Use the following hashtags on Twitter!

#MHYRDSB #WBA
#withinbetweenaround
#YRDSB #CMHAW2023

Check out this [Feather Breathing](#) exercise!



Wellness Wednesdays!

Wellness Wednesday!

MUSCLE RELAXATION EXERCISES

Feeling anxious affects our bodies and minds. Muscle relaxation exercises can help us decompress and feel better in our bodies, which can in turn help us feel better in our brains.

All of our bodies work in different ways. We know our own bodies best. You can adjust these activities however you need to make them work for you.



 School Mental Health Ontario

 Santé mentale en milieu scolaire Ontario

find out more at

jack.org/covid



The above [image](#) can provide a great conversation starter to encourage wellness movement and breaks.

Spend time Outdoors!

- [Shinrin Yoku, Forest Bathing or Forest Therapy](#)
- [Walking Games](#)

Wellness Wednesdays invite us to consider what helps us feel and do well. Wellness looks different for each of us. Our wellness can be connected to who we are and the things we enjoy. It can also be connected to our experiences, culture, beliefs and many other pieces that shape our identity.

Engaging in activities that connect mind and body is a great way to enhance the wellness of ALL children and youth

Try and explore!

This activity can help build a regular practice that benefits you and your family. The activity promotes focusing their attention, calming feelings of anxiety, and managing stress. Stretch in a way that feels comfortable to you. [Let go and stretch](#)

Practice and model this activity with your child(ren).

[Body scan](#)



What is One Small Thing that helps you feel well? Tell us how you enhance or maintain your wellness?

Are there actions that you can take to help those around you improve their wellness?

Share with us!

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#YRDSB #CMHAW2023

Take Care Thursdays!

Take Care Thursday!



Visit [Jack.org](https://www.jack.org) to learn more about the importance of self-care.

Take Care Thursdays invites us to consider how we take care of ourselves and those around us. Taking moments each day to practice self-care and collective care with those around us is important.

Equipping ourselves and our child(ren) with the tools needed to Take Care and enhance positive mental health can be a great way to promote overall wellness.

Try and explore!

We invite you to explore [Self Care 101](#) with your child(ren) during Take Care Thursdays and beyond.

Visit [Kinark Autism Services](#) for fun and educational videos that support taking care

Visit [School Mental Health Ontario](#) to learn and explore resources that support parents and caregivers in improving children and youth mental health.

What is One Small Thing that helps you care for yourself and those around you?

Share with us on social media!

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Use the following hashtags on Twitter!

#MHYRDSB #WBA
#withinbetweenaround
#YRDSB #CMHAW2023



Focus Fridays!

Focus Friday!

REPLACING UNHELPFUL THOUGHTS

Sometimes it's hard to notice and challenge our unhelpful thinking. They are often **habits of thought** that can be persistent. Keep trying, it gets easier with practice!



If you're struggling to come up with helpful responses to your own unhelpful thoughts, it can help to put yourself in the mindset of a friend. **If your friend was having the same unhelpful thoughts**, how would you respond?



The above [image](#) can provide a great conversation starter to support students in exploring how they might change unhelpful thoughts.

Focus Fridays invites us to pause and reflect. Considering situations in an intentional way can offer insight and clarity.

Consider the following reflection questions to share with your child(ren).

- 1) What went well today/this week? (Small things matter, even things that may seem insignificant)
- 2) Did you have any challenging or difficult moments? How did you deal with these moments?

Try and explore!

Taking time to pause and reflect can help develop an awareness of our physical and mental states.

Pause and reflect

Use [social stories](#), pictures and other forms of expression to support reflection in children and youth with unique gifts, abilities and needs. down to be more thoughtful.



What is One Small Thing that helps you focus, pause, and reflect?

Share with us on social media!

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Use the following hashtags on Twitter!

#MHYRDSB #WBA
#withinbetweenaround
#YRDSB #CMHAW2023

May 2024

#Within, Between & Around Us: Children's Mental Health Awareness Week and Beyond Calendar

CMHAW Workshops: [For more information and additional opportunities!](#)

<p>Mindful Monday <i>Mindful Mondays invite us to slow things down by pausing, reflecting and being present in the moment.</i></p>	<p>Thoughtful Tuesday <i>Thoughtful Tuesdays invite us to focus on our thoughts and their connections to our feelings, and actions</i></p>	<p>Wellness Wednesday <i>Wellness Wednesdays invite us to consider what helps us feel and do well.</i></p>	<p>Take Care Thursday <i>Take Care Thursdays invites us to consider how we take care of ourselves and those around us.</i></p>	<p>Focus Friday <i>Focus Friday invites us to pause, reflect and consider situations in an intentional way</i></p>
<p style="text-align: right;">6</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Registration</p> <p>York Region Public Health: Concussions and Mental Health, Caregivers, 5:00- 6:00</p> <p>York Region Public Health: Substance Use, Caregivers, 6:00- 7:00</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">7</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Registration</p> <p>York Region Public Health: Vaping, Caregivers, 5:00 -6:00</p> <p>Hope House Hospice:Caring for the Caregiver, Caregivers, 6:00 - 7:00</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">8</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Registration</p> <p>John Howard Society York Region: Supporting a child experiencing bullying, Caregivers, 5:00- 6:00</p> <p>Hong Fook: How to enhance Children's Performance by applying a right Mindset, Caregivers, 6:00- 7:00</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">9</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Registration</p> <p>360 Kids: Tough Love, Caregivers, 5:00- 6:00</p> <p>York Region Public Health: Healthy Brains, Caregivers, 6:00- 7:00</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">10</p> <p>Resource for Parents: Four Things you can do to Support your Teen's Mental Health</p>

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Try this!

Mindfulness Tools

- [Take 5](#) by Kids Help Phone

Mindfulness at home

- [Imaginary walk](#)
- [Guided imagery](#)
- [Deep breathing](#)
- [25 Fun Mindfulness Activities](#)
- [Activities for Children & Teens](#)



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Try this!

Expressions of gratitude can be a great way to be thoughtful!

What am I grateful for?
[Gratitude Exercise](#) by Jack.Org



Meditation

- [Guided Meditation for Kids | STREAM OF MINDFULNESS | Meditation for all the Family](#)
- [10-Minute Meditation For Kids](#)

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Try this!

Our wellness encompasses many aspects.

Try [the Wheel of Well-being](#) activity with your family



Kids Help Phone -
[Breathing Balloon Tip](#)

External Offering: [York Hills Triple P - Building Teenagers Survival Skills](#)
6:30- 8:30

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Try this!

Physical activity: [Spend Time Outdoors - Walking Games](#)

Tips for Self care



What is One Small Thing your family is doing to take care today?

Use #onesmallthing
Share with us on x and Instagram @MH_YRDSB

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Try this!

Sometimes we learn to unlearn



Emotion Regulation



[Regulation Techniques - Window of Tolerance](#)

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Try This!

- [Fill the Cup](#)
- [Two-minute mindfulness](#)
- [Mindfulness: The Present Moment-Worksheet](#)
- [How to Create a glitter Jar for Kids](#)



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Try this!

Activity: [Finding Solutions](#)

YOU Matter
#takearetuesday
#onesmallthing

Mental Health Activities

- [Activities you can do at home!](#)



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Try this!



Resources for Parents:

- [Activity Ideas to Help Kids Eat Healthy](#)
- [Understanding Weight Bias Fact Sheet](#)
- [Non-Appearance Based Compliments \(for lunch bags or backpacks\)](#)
- [Talking with your Student Athlete about Mental Health](#)

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Try this!

Activities:
[Self Care Bingo](#)
[Balance Bean](#)

Resource:
[Kid's Help Phone's Self-Care Checklist](#)



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Try this!

Activities:
Pause and Colour:
[Mindful Colouring](#)

Plant a seed and watch it grow

Its okay to feel not okay



		<p>External Offering: York Hills- Exploring and Understanding the Inattentive Brain - 6:30-8:00</p>		
<p style="text-align: right;">27</p> <p>Try this!</p> <p>Mindfulness Tools</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kids Help Phone: Meditation and Mindfulness Tip • Breathing Balloon • Glowing fire body scan 	<p style="text-align: right;">28</p> <p>Try this!</p> <p>Activity: SMHO Organize Your Mind</p>  <p>Resource Kit: SMHO No Problem Too Big or Too Small</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">29</p> <p>Try this!</p> <p>Spending time outdoors is a great way to keep well.</p> <p>Set up a world-watching window. Bring the outside in. Find a window view or other view designed to induce feelings of deep relaxation, awe, and vitality—it will take you away from your inward-facing world OR</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Watch the Live Ontario FeederWatch 	<p style="text-align: right;">30</p> <p>Try this!</p> <p>Plant a seed and watch it grow. What might growing activities and nature exploration look like at school and at home?</p>  <p>My Happy Heart</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">31</p> <p>Try this!</p> <p>Activity: Stretch it Out: Body Movement Exercise</p> <p>What's in the Cards?</p> 

Mindfulness means paying attention in a particular way: on purpose, in the present moment, and non-judgmentally.

Jon Kabat-Zinn

External Offering:
[Addressing Mental Health Challenges for Children and Youth with ASD](#) - 6:30- 8:30

Cam

- [Toronto Zoo | Live Cams](#)
- [Webcams | Smithsonian's National Zoo and Conservation Biology Institute](#)

30-DAY SELF CARE CHALLENGE

DAY 1 Get up at work	DAY 2 Do a 5-minute meditation	DAY 3 Clean your room	DAY 4 Take a nap	DAY 5 Play a video game	DAY 6 Take a nice shower
DAY 7 Listen to your favourite album	DAY 8 Enjoy your favourite hot beverage	DAY 9 Start an art project	DAY 10 Try a new TV show	DAY 11 Go for a run	DAY 12 Make your favourite meal
DAY 13 Get breakfast in bed	DAY 14 Send up a video card with a friend	DAY 15 Take a bath or shower	DAY 16 Start a music collection	DAY 17 Watch a movie you love	DAY 18 Try learning to knit
DAY 19 Make your favourite breakfast meal	DAY 20 Write a love letter to yourself	DAY 21 Make a time schedule for some thing	DAY 22 Play a video board game with family	DAY 23 Do a mini workout	DAY 24 Go to bed early
DAY 25 Take yourself to dinner	DAY 26 Reconnect with a friend	DAY 27 Write a postcard to a friend	DAY 28 Watch a documentary	DAY 29 Watch a movie you love	DAY 30 Take your favourite shower

Candle and Flower Breathing - Mindful and Calming Breathing Technique



Try this!

A BETTER HEADSPACE!

We all get caught up in our thoughts. We might fixate on things that we'd rather not. Give yourself a break to get into a better headspace!

- Go for a walk
- Take a nap
- Play a video game
- Read a book
- Do your homework



jack.org/covid

Try this!

Gratitude Mantra
 #onesmallthing

GRATITUDE REMINDERS

It's important to remind ourselves to be grateful for the good things in our lives and the good things we bring into the lives of those around us. If you're feeling down and in need of a little boost, look at the list below to see if anything jumps out at you! Try it out - say it out loud. Say it a few more times. Think about how it makes you feel stronger! **You got this.**

- I am capable
- I am valuable
- I am enough
- I am a good person
- I deserve love
- I deserve compassion
- I deserve patience
- I am doing the best I can



jack.org/covid

Its okay to meet ourselves at where we're at



Extra offerings for the month!

- [51 Mindfulness Exercises at home](#)
- [Easy and Fun Mental Health Activities for Home](#)
- [30+ videos & mental health activities for kids](#)

- [5 Restorative Mental Health Activities for Kids](#)
- [11 home activities to boost kids](#)
- [Mental Health Activities for Kids](#)
- [Games, Worksheets and Activities for Kids](#)

One Small Thing is...

Anything that helps you to feel positive and hopeful!

Here is some examples of small things shared by students and parents:

- **“ When my daughter shares funny Tik Tok videos with me after work”**
Parent
- **“Being brave when I feel nervous”** – Student
- **“ Taking homemade lunches to school ”** – Student
- **“Feeling accepted”** – Student
- **“My family & friends”** – Student



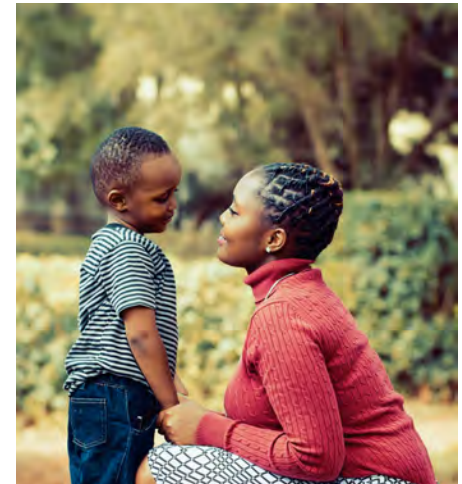
Many identities, languages and expressions of wellness are missing, how do you and your family express Within Between and Around (holistic mental health)?

Share with us on social media @MH_YRDSB (X (formerly Twitter) and Instagram)



Within Between & Around in action through the ABCs of Mental Health

- Within, Between and Around can include the relationships we have with others that support our mental health. Meaningful relationships and conversations can improve your child's mental health and create a sense of value in knowing that they are heard, listened to and **acknowledged**.
- **Bridge:** "Within" can encompass our gifts, strengths and assets. Highlighting and seeing the positives in everyday situations may highlight. "I noticed you really tried with your homework," " I love the way you think outside the box/ your creativity"
- **Connection: Around can encompass the many aspects of things that can impact MH.** A simple check-in can build connection and support positive mental health: "How was your day? What was the highlight of your day?" "You seem quiet. Is everything okay?"



ADD YOUR OWN:)

We would love to learn more about how you and your family practices wellness on social media **@MH_YRDSB (X and Instagram)**

- Engage in cultural/identity-affirming activities
- Movement that works for you
- Chair stretches
- Listen to music/play an instrument
- Call a friend
- Open a window/get natural light
- Move/walk/bike around the neighbourhood
- Get outdoors
- Read/listen to a book
- Play guitar or other instruments
- Watch a show that lifts you up
- Cook, bake or create something
- Never be too afraid to ask for help
- Wash your face with cool water when feeling stressed or anxious
- Practice self-care

Families / Community

- Check in to see how your child(ren) day went
- Use [School Mental Health Ontario](#) resources
- Game night
- Faith/spiritual practices
- Read together
- Listen to stories together
- Build routines that support the day to day
- Cooking together, i.e. making recipes
- Doing family activities together
- Connecting with elders in the community
- Family mindfulness
- Get outdoors together
- Explore nature
- Storytelling
- Get active together
- Do homework together

ADD YOUR OWN:) on social media **@MH_YRDSB (X(formerly Twitter) and Instagram)**