



Student Mental Health ACTION KIT

Practical resources to support student mental health

We recognize the incredible efforts of educators, school and board staff who serve students daily in classrooms across Ontario. We know you do so despite your personal pandemic challenges. Your work matters. When students attend school, whether in-person or online, they engage in important routines and foster connections that can help them to feel more balanced amidst the uncertainties. Thank you for all you do to create welcoming and inclusive classrooms that help our students to learn and grow.

The following resources and learning opportunities have been prepared to both bolster student mental health and support the well-being of educators. These classroom-ready resources can be used for either virtual and in-person learning. Additional classroom materials and learning opportunities are in development and will be shared in the coming weeks and months.

Visit our [website](#) at any time to access additional resources and supports.

The action kit is designed to help you support students in the following areas through a series of modules (lesson plans and supplementary materials):

1. Promoting wellness during challenging times
2. Supporting student mental health learning
3. Encouraging early help-seeking when mental health problems arise





Resources and learning opportunities

Getting ready and minds on

Here are some resources that can help you, and your students, to learn about mental health at school.

Professional learning resources for you:

Mentally Healthy Return to School Following Winter Break and Beyond Educator Resource

This tool provides guidance for educators to support students as they transition back from the winter break and engage in remote learning.

[Download](#)

Tips for educators to help students manage stress during uncertain times

As an educator, you won't be able to take away the stressors your students feel, but you may be able to help to minimize their impact. This article includes strategies that you can share with students that can help them to cope.

[Read the article](#)

Supporting Mentally Healthy Conversations About Anti-Black Racism With Students

This info sheet provides tips and information about how to have mentally healthy conversations about anti-Black racism with students.

[Download](#)

ONE-CALL

The ONE-CALL process provides educators with a step-by-step approach to support students when they exhibit signs of an emotional or behavioural issue.

[Download](#)

Supporting Minds: Strategies at a Glance

The information guide provides an overview of common mental health issues. It includes suggestions for differentiated instructional strategies and/or accommodations.

[Download](#)





Resources for students:

Student visuals

It's normal to feel anxious during challenging times. With the help of Ontario secondary school students, we've put together youth-friendly materials for the classroom, or via social media, to help students understand more about anxiety and coping in relation to the pandemic.

[Explore the tools](#)

No Problem Too Big or Too Small

This resource is designed to promote help-seeking and provides ideas and strategies for self-care for students. It was designed with input from Ontario secondary students.

[Download](#)

Reaching Out

Reaching Out is a tip sheet for students to support help-seeking by showcasing different ways to start the conversation with a trusted person and what to expect after reaching out.

[Download](#)

Self-Care 101

Self-care is an important part of wellness and even more critical when we go through difficult and stressful times in our lives. This tip sheet provides information for students on how take care of themselves.

[Download](#)

COVID-19 Youth Mental Health Resource Hub

A hub of resources to help students to take care of themselves and others during this challenging time.

[Visit the hub](#)





Featured classroom-ready resources

Class Conversation Starters

These conversation starters can be used to support a welcoming and caring learning environment that supports learning, wellness, and equitable outcomes for all students.

[Download](#)

Everyday Mental Health Classroom Resource (co-developed by ETFO and SMH-ON)

The *Everyday Mental Health Classroom Resource* offers a collection of high-quality, everyday mental health practices to enhance students' social and emotional skills. Use the [view all and filter page](#) to filter practices for virtual learning.

[Launch the resource](#)

Faith and Wellness: A Daily Classroom Resource (co-developed by OECTA and SMH-ON)

Faith and Wellness: A Daily Mental Health Resource offers a collection of high-quality, everyday mental health practices to enhance students' social and emotional skills. These practices are rooted in the Catholic Faith. Use the [view all and filter page](#) to filter practices for virtual learning.

[Launch the resource](#)

First Ten Days (and Beyond)

First Ten Days (and Beyond) was created for the start of the school year, but the information and activities are still relevant for now. The activities focus on relationships, connection and community. They are designed to help students ease into school routines.

[Download](#)





Lesson plans and supplementary materials in development

The modules are designed to support you with the delivery of information in these areas:

1. Promoting wellness during challenging times
2. Supporting student mental health learning
3. Encouraging early help-seeking when mental health problems arise

In addition to providing the lesson plan materials, School Mental Health Ontario will be offering a range of implementation supports. You are not alone in this important work!

1. *Promoting wellness during challenging times*

Virtual Field Trips: Stress Management and Coping

In partnership with Ophea, we're offering a series of lessons (organized by early years, grades 1-3, 4-6, 7-8, and 9-12) to support the development of stress management and healthy coping skills. The activities in these lessons provide an opportunity for skill development and modelling for both students and educators.

Each lesson will include (1) a minds-on, (2) a pre-recorded session hosted by an Ophea educator ambassador and School Mental Health Ontario clinician, and (3) a consolidation activity. The monthly field trip topics include:

- January – Breathing strategies (materials coming soon)
- February – Muscle relaxation strategies
- March – Visualization strategies
- April – Distraction strategies
- May – Thought-changing strategies
- June – Gratitude strategies

2. *Supporting student mental health learning*

Student learning about mental health needs to be developmentally appropriate and contextualized for student needs. As such, there are two main offerings in this area:

Elementary

The Elementary Health and Physical Education curriculum includes a focus on social emotional learning and mental health literacy. School Mental Health Ontario has prepared a series of lesson plans to support instruction related to these curriculum expectations. Cross-curricular connections are made.

Secondary

A student mental health literacy series of lessons will be provided for use with secondary students, focusing on building their understanding of mental health and mental illness, signs of mental health problems, and how/where to access help when needed.

3. *Encouraging early help-seeking when mental health problems arise*

In addition to these lesson plans, student friendly resources to support help-seeking and to enhance awareness of pathways to mental health supports will be provided in an ongoing manner.





Key messages to use with students about mental health and well-being

Here are some key messages related to mental health and well-being to refresh with students. You know your students best, and so these are starting points for conversations. Use your professional judgement to modify these statements in ways that are developmentally appropriate and contextualized to individual students' lived experiences.

- We know the transition to fully online learning is a hard one – we are here to help.
- It is not unusual to feel worried, tired or sad right now because these are challenging times.
- Mental health is a good thing! We all want to have good mental health for ourselves, our family, and our friends.
- We can take care of our mental health, just like we take care of our physical health.
- We can do this by eating well, getting a good night's sleep, being active, and taking time to relax, have fun, and do some things that make us feel happy every day.
- Remember that part of staying mentally well means connecting with others who share your interests, culture, identities, and values.
- There are people who work in schools, and in our community, who are trained to help you to find ways to get through this so you can feel better.
- If you are feeling unwell (e.g., overwhelmed, depressed, panicky), you can talk to me or another trusted adult.

Please take care of yourself

We recognize that these are difficult times for school and board staff. The pressure has been intense, all while you also experience the pandemic. We know that you are doing all you can to help your students through this. We hope that you can prioritize your wellness and mental health as well. Personal wellness looks different for everyone. There is no one way to maintain balance in the face of the challenges we are facing together. Taking time for you, to engage in self-care practices and maintain connections that help you to feel well, is so very important, and sets an excellent example for our students.

Personal Resiliency Tips During COVID-19

This tip sheet offers basic self-care reminders that may be helpful during this time.

[Download](#)

