



HEARTS & MINDS



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From TDSB Psychological Services to Your Family

Dear Parents, Caregivers, and Families in our TDSB community, We recognize that this year has been challenging and stressful for so many of us. We wanted to take the opportunity to recognize your strengths and your resilience this past year. It has not been easy adjusting to the constant change and new experiences that the pandemic has brought to our lives. We want to acknowledge that despite all the difficulties, we see your strength, bravery, and resilience and we celebrate YOU for being amazing parents and caregivers. Thank you for allowing us to provide you with support and strategies through this newsletter.

We hope it has been helpful for you and your family.

Have a happy, safe, and relaxing summer!

Sincerely, The Hearts & Minds Committee



**CLICK
HERE
FOR THE
2021 TDSB
SUMMER
WELL-BEING
GUIDE!**



OUR ARTICLES, TIPS, AND SUGGESTIONS DO NOT CONSTITUTE TREATMENT ADVICE.

IF YOU OR A FAMILY MEMBER IS IN CRISIS, PLEASE CONTACT **KIDS HELP PHONE: 1-800-668-6868** OR THE DISTRESS CENTRE: 416-408-4357

COMMUNITY CORNER



CHECK OUT THESE JUNE EVENTS & RESOURCES FROM THE TDSB!

Recent violent events targeting specific racialized or religious communities, such as the violence that occurred in London Ontario has led to increased feelings of vulnerability, sadness, and fear among many members of our community. We stand together with those within our TDSB community and beyond in condemning all acts of hate and violence.

Students may experience a wide range of reactions and emotions when hearing about the tragic event in London, and others events that have, or may, occur in our world.

TDSB Professional Support Services have prepared a tip sheet for parents that may be helpful when speaking with their children about tragic events. [Click Here.](#)

IN JUNE, WE HONOUR NATIONAL INDIGENOUS HISTORY MONTH



with the Urban Indigenous Education Centre.

We can celebrate and honour First Nations, Métis, and Inuit cultures and perspectives by enjoying Indigenous stories, literature, art and music, and learning from Indigenous people and their experiences.

This year, "National Indigenous History Month is dedicated to the missing children, the families left behind, and the survivors of residential schools."

[Click here for the NIHM Schedule of Events.](#)

[Click here for more info & resources to celebrate NIHM with your family!](#)



TDSB

CELEBRATES PRIDE MONTH!



"Our TDSB community recognizes and celebrates Pride Month and the diversity that exists among all staff and students. We aim to increase awareness that individuals in the 2SLGBTQ+ community face additional barriers to maintaining good mental health. We strive to eliminate stereotyping and discrimination so all members of our community can thrive."

Join us in exploring the Pride Month resources to celebrate our diverse community and make the TDSB a safe, equitable, and inclusive place.



TDSB MENTAL HEALTH & WELL-BEING RESOURCES

Click on the logo for the full list of mental health & well-being resources for caregivers & students, which can be accessed and used all summer!



"Let's Connect" is a new mental health and well-being virtual series that allows caregivers and parents to come together with TDSB Professional Support Services to share ideas and resources.

The first meet-up is June 22, 2021 to discuss the 'Transition to Summer'.

Let's Connect
ABOUT MENTAL HEALTH AND WELL-BEING





RAISING BRAVE KIDS IN UNCERTAIN TIMES

By Afroze Anjum, Psy.D. C.Psych.



One of the character strengths that can help during current times of uncertainty and during our transition from school to Summer Break, and back to school again in the Fall, is BRAVERY.

Bravery can be defined as facing our fears during difficult and threatening times. It can be physical, psychological, or moral. Bravery is important because it lowers our anxiety and improves the quality of our relationships. How can caregivers contribute to their children becoming brave?

1 Share brave stories: Exchange stories with your child or teen about times when you have overcome your fears. For instance, you can tell them about moving away from home for the first time, or interviewing for a new job. Normalizing worry and fear (which we all experience) while validating being brave and bold (despite the outcome!) can set good examples for your child. Remind them of times when they have been brave, like when they jumped off the diving board for the first time, or how they protected their friend from a bully. Look for opportunities to praise them for their brave acts. Bring their attention to role models of bravery in real life, stories, or movies that you watch together

2 Give opportunities to foster bravery: When your child or teen is encountering a stressful or difficult situation, ask them about their thoughts and feelings. If they have worried or scared feelings, gauge if their thoughts surrounding their fears are realistic or unrealistic. If they are realistic, then you can work with them to help find solutions. If some of their worried thoughts are unrealistic, teaching helpful thinking can encourage them to be brave in tough situations.



Here are more resources to encourage realistic thinking in children and teens.

3 Model bravery: Our children learn best through the modelling of skills and behaviours - when they see us "walk the talk" and show them what bravery looks like, they may be more likely to follow our lead! Use this resource to make a "list of fears" and think about small steps you can take to be brave and overcome your fears. Model these small steps with your child or teen and encourage them to make their own list, just like you! Also, discuss and model the difference between bravery, healthy risk-taking, and dangerous risk-taking.

SUMMER LISTENING FOR CAREGIVERS

By Bryony Hupka, M.A., C.Psych.



Podcasts are a free and easy way to absorb all kinds of information, interests, and ideas - Especially when it comes to supporting our kids and families! Check out some of the podcasts we are listening to right now, by clicking on the links, or by searching the titles wherever you like to listen to podcasts:



TILT PARENTING PODCAST

More than 200 episodes with authors and experts, on "raising differently-wired kids with confidence, connection and joy". You can filter episodes by interest (e.g. ADHD, anxiety in teens, giftedness, etc...).

GOOD INSIDE PODCAST

Clinical Psychologist Dr. Becky Kennedy tackles tough parenting questions such as tantrums, screen time, and sibling rivalry, all in under 30 minute episodes.

HAPPY LISTENING!

READING FOR FUN THIS SUMMER: HOW TO ENGAGE YOUR RELUCTANT READER

By: Laura Cousineau, M.A.S.P., C. Psych. Assoc.



WHY IS READING FOR FUN IMPORTANT?

Kids appear to benefit most from a mix of reading for purpose *AND* reading for pleasure! Studies have found that youth who read for both learning and fun have stronger language skills, greater imagination, and higher motivation and achievement than youth who only read for academic reasons. Brain scan studies have also found that people who frequently read fiction are better able to empathize with others and see things from other's perspectives, both of which are helpful skills for navigating our social world! *Summer can be a great time to encourage reading for pure enjoyment and fun!*

WHO ARE RELUCTANT READERS?

As children enter middle and high school, reading for fun typically drops off, especially during the summer months. In addition, youth who experience learning differences or challenges are often reluctant to read for pleasure, as reading can often be a source of frustration or stress during school time.

HOW CAN YOU ENGAGE YOUR CHILD IN READING FOR FUN THIS SUMMER?



Make Reading a Choice, Not a Chore!

Allow your child or teen to choose the *THEME* and *FORMAT* of their reading this summer and try not to enforce specific timelines or goals. Encourage reading in all its forms (e.g. graphic novels, recipe books, "listicles", or even audio books). Providing choice and flexibility takes the pressure off reading and increases enjoyment! **Take a look at reading lists [here](#), [here](#) and [here](#)** - Let your child or teen choose some options they like! Finally, resist the urge to criticize the topic or mode of reading your kid chooses this summer (*Another book about teen vampires? Sounds great!*).



Try 'Read-Alouds'

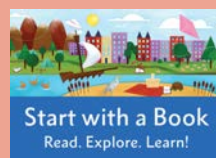
Reading aloud brings stories to life and creates bonding experiences with your child. And don't forget your teen – studies have shown that when adolescents hear books read aloud, it improves their comprehension and reduces stress! Read in the language you speak at home or tell stories aloud to your child. Use silly voices, dramatic effect, and different reading locations (The park? Waiting in line at the grocery store?) to make the experience extra fun! Click [here](#) for more tips on reading aloud with your child at home.



Make it Easy!

Sometimes, kids are reluctant readers because the thought of starting a new book can be daunting. Instead, help your child or teen find a series they enjoy. A series makes the storyline and characters familiar and therefore, easier to pick up and keep reading! Also, letting your child follow their passion when choosing something to read always makes things easier. For teens, let them tie reading into their social media interests. Click [here](#) for more tips to engage your teen in reading!

FINALLY, DON'T SWEAT IT!
USE THESE SUMMER READING
GUIDES TO HELP YOU GET STARTED
AND ENJOY A SUMMER OF READING FUN!



edutopia



MAKING A SMOOTH TRANSITION FROM SUMMER TO SEPTEMBER

By: Paul Szego, Ph.D., C.Psych. & Laura Cousineau, M.A.S.P., C. Psych. Assoc.



Summer Break is fast approaching for TDSB families – and while your kids will be enjoying a well-deserved break, it also means that parents and caregivers may be looking ahead to what September may bring. Because of virtual learning this year, the transition back to school this upcoming Fall may be even more challenging than usual. **Here are some things you can do over the summer to make the transition back to school smoother, easier, and less stressful – for everyone!**

KEEPING UP WITH ROUTINES in the summer can lead to an easier transition in September, since this is usually when things like sleep, mealtimes, and daily schedules become more structured. As much as possible, try to keep a *consistent sleep and meal schedule (even on weekends)* at home during the summer months. The predictability of *daily, summer routines (like making the bed every morning, walking the dog after dinner, or limiting screens to certain times of the day)* may help your child return to the structure of school with more familiarity and ease!



Most kids have been around their parents much more than ever before, and away from their friends for longer than usual. *This means that they may be experiencing new emotions when thinking about their return to school.* It might be harder for your children to be away from you in September, or they may be feeling some big emotions when thinking about seeing their friends again. Try to use the **“3 L” approach** to managing and **TALKING ABOUT EMOTIONS** with your child this summer -



- 1) Listen without Judgement
- 2) Label and Acknowledge their Feelings
- 3) Lend a Hand if needed!

KEEPING OUR BRAINS ENGAGED over the summer helps with the return to learning in September... and it's easy to do! *Board games and outdoor sports* help kids flex their prosocial and executive functioning skills over the summer. *Puzzles, LEGO, Minecraft, and coding games* can be really stimulating for kids of all ages and they also let kids practice their problem-solving and mental planning skills. Creativity and imagination are important parts of academic learning, and they are easy to encourage in the summer through *drawing, writing, crafts, or outdoor play activities!* Cooking or baking can be a fun (and tasty!) way to practice a little math together. Lastly, you can never go wrong by *exploring the plants, flowers, insects, and animals* all around us... just steer clear of the poison ivy!



The transition back to school may bring about some old and new worries – not just about Covid-19, but also about things like finding someone to play with at recess, or being called on in front of their class. These worries are normal for many kids; however, it's important to **NOTICE ANY CHANGES IN BEHAVIOUR** as we get closer to September, as this can be a sign that the worries are more than your child or teen can handle. For example, *trouble with sleep, a change in their eating habits, an increased need for reassurance, or aches and pains (like stomach or headaches) that are more than normal* can all be indicators of an emerging or escalating problem with worry. If you have concerns for your child, [this resource](#) can help, or you can contact [Mental Health TO](#) for support.