



Stronger Together

Parkland School Division Family Supports Newsletter January 19, 2021

Dear parents and caregivers,

We all have days where we feel down and may find it hard to cope, but we are able to bounce back. It is important to understand that sometimes there may be more complex issues going on and we need to reach out for help.

Take care, Vicky Mamczasz -Family Support Facilitator, Dena Davis- Sunrise Supports Program Liaison

Try the '100 Day Challenge' to improve your family's mental health - Dr. Peter Silverstone

<https://globalnews.ca/news/7551128/2021-new-years-goals-mental-health/>

University of Alberta psychiatry professor Peter Silverstone said there is more hope in 2021 and that there is light at the end of the tunnel.



"We haven't left the tunnel," Silverstone said. "We are about 100 days away — by the time the weather has changed, the economy has changed and enough people have been vaccinated."

He suggests a 100-day challenge to improve mental health, as opposed to making a long-term New Year's resolution.

"There's a lot of evidence that setting small goals to achieve is much more beneficial in the short and long term, [as] opposed to setting a big long goal."

"Every day you can do at least one kind of exercise, every day you can reach out to somebody, every day you can try and help somebody else," Silverstone said. "By the end of that, you will have done 100 different things."

"If you're a family with kids, you can do 100 days of 'Simon Says', and do an activity with your kids and find some interesting challenges."



Family Tips for Teens and Mental Health Joel Pukalo - Family Life Psychology - Stony Plain 780-963-7451

- Free online webinars

Low cost counselling for children and adults

Supporting teens with their mental health presents a unique set of challenges. The teen years bring many changes in life. Teens experience physiological changes as they go through puberty. There are also many emotional and social changes that teens navigate too. Some teens are

able to cope with these changes better than others.

I've had the privilege of supporting teens and their parents through these challenging times for nearly a decade. This work is near and dear to my heart. As a parent myself, I'm grieved to see the struggles. But as my own mother used to say, every challenge is an opportunity to learn and grow. Learning how to be *in the mess together* with our teens is the key to helping them through difficult times.

I've found there are two key principles to helping teens become mentally strong and resilient.

1. Acknowledging and accepting our struggles. There are two types of people, those who struggle and those try to be strong by pretending to have it all together. Trying to be strong on our own and avoiding our struggles makes us weak. Learning how to embrace our weakness helps us to be strong.
2. Sharing our struggles with others. I often tell teens that we are only as strong as our supporting cast (the friends, family, teachers, and coaches who can help support us). We all need help sometimes. Strong people reach out. Weak people stay stuck and isolated.

Many teens and adults get stuck in life because they've never learned how to reach out and ask for help. Teaching our teens these two most important skills of being real (accepting our struggles) and reaching out (sharing our struggles with others) will help prepare them to deal with the challenging seasons of life.

Dr. Stan Kutcher and his team from *Teen Mental Health Speaks* provides some very practical guidelines for parents and teens about coping with depression and other teen mental health challenges. With respect to depression some warning signs to watch for in teens include:

- Eat much less than normal or much more than normal
- Sleep much less than normal or much more than normal
- Move restlessly or barely move at all
- Feel really tired and lack energy
- Lose feelings of pleasure or enjoyment
- Lose interest in activities that they usually enjoy
- Feel worthless, hopeless, or guilty (without a good reason)
- Have thoughts of death and dying, including suicidal thoughts and plans
- Have trouble concentrating or making decisions

Teen Mental Health Speaks emphasizes the importance of helping teens develop a strong network of personal and professional supports. They also provide some very practical tips to increase overall mental health including:

- Structure your day. Start with basic daily activities like showering, walking the dog, or making lunch. Keeping a daily diary or schedule can be a big help in keeping your mood stable and preventing you from feeling overwhelmed, especially if you're a visual person
- Exercise. Daily physical activity improves your health and mood, and helps you get rid of stress.
- Sleep. Getting 8-9 hours of sleep each night will help you feel better the next day.
- Eat healthy. Eating a balanced diet gives your body the fuel it needs to help combat stress. Try not to skip meals and go easy on the junk food.
- Stay away from alcohol and drugs. Although you may feel better in the short-term, alcohol and drugs will not solve your problems. They'll only give you a false sense of confidence and may make your problems worse in the long run.
- Limit caffeine. Caffeine can make your heart race, which can make you feel worse.
- Daily relaxation time. Take time each day to relax, using techniques like Box Breathing or Hand Relaxation.
- Go outside. Staying inside all the time can be really draining. Getting outside and enjoying the sun and fresh air can help you feel better.
- Build healthy relationships. It's important to have a good support network of people you trust.
- Talk. Talk to the people in your support network about your feelings and concerns. Sharing your feelings with someone else can feel like a weight is lifted off your chest.
- Stop thinking so much. Thinking about something over and over can make you feel worse. Try not to let yourself replay negative thoughts and situations in your mind. Distract yourself, if necessary!
- Be realistic. Depression can make you interpret things as more negative than they actually are. Remind yourself that Depression skews your perspective.

When working with parents and teens, I encourage them to start small. Pick one or two of these areas to practice each day together. Review progress regularly and discuss any barriers that prevent your teen from following their desired plan. Supporting teen mental health is all about parents and teens learning how to work together to communicate, support each other, and find flexible ways to improve mental health in a way that best works for your teen. I always say that the best ideas are the ones that work. Often in working with teens the best ideas are the ones that we develop with the teen because a teenager is more likely to follow through with their own mental wellness plan than a plan prescribed to them from an external source.

Resources access from <http://teenmentalhealth.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/07/Magazine-depression.pdf>

[Mental Health: Coping and Connection for Children & Families During COVID-19](#) (check out the link for more information)

- Check in with your child encourage questions to make sense of the current situation
- Encourage positive activities and thoughts of safety
- Self Care for Parents and Caregivers is important
- Limit media coverage
- Seek support and continued connections
- Keep active
- Be mindful of how you speak
- Ask health care professionals for help



FEB
17

Teen Mental Health: Depression & Self-Harm

by Alberta Parenting for the Future
Association

Follow

Free

Parents concerned about their teen's mental health and how to recognize and support them.

About this Event

Presenter: Larissa Predy, M.A., R. Psych - Little Oaks Psychology

Teens (**approx. 13-years and up**) are at increased risk of mood concerns and self-harm continues to be common in this age group. The teenage brain goes through major shifts in growth and development, often prioritizing reasoning skills over emotional regulation. This presentation will discuss how negative/stressful experiences affect mental health in teens, how they cope and what they need for support. Also discussed will be the role of perfectionism and social anxiety and how they cope.

This workshop is in partnership with Parkland School Division.

Date And Time

Wed, February 17, 2021
6:00 PM - 8:00 PM MST
[Add to Calendar](#)

Location

Online Event

Register at :

<https://www.eventbrite.ca/e/teen-mental-health-depression-self-harm-registration-131630182419?aff>

[Living Through Depression: Julia's Story](#)



The most important thing to remember is that prevention and early intervention are integral to the overall wellness of your child. This helps your child to develop lifelong coping strategies, empowers children to deal with stressful life events and builds resiliency. Your family doctor is a great resource or you can reach out to one of the community partners below.

7 TYPES OF REST WE ALL NEED

PHYSICAL REST: MORE SLEEP, NAPS, DEEP BREATHS, RELAXATION, STRETCHING

MENTAL REST: MUSIC, MEDITATION, SILENCE

EMOTIONAL REST: OFFLOADING EMOTIONAL BAGGAGE, TALKING TO A GOOD LISTENER, THERAPY

SOCIAL REST: CATCHING UP WITH AN OLD FRIEND OR CONVERSELY, TAKING A BREAK FROM SOCIALIZING

CREATIVE REST: READING A BOOK, TAKING A WALK IN NATURE

SPIRITUAL REST: DOING THINGS THAT GIVE YOU SENSE OF PURPOSE OR MEANING

SENSORY REST: TURNING OFF DEVICES AND SCREENS, FIND THE QUIET



January 25 – April 8, 2021 FREE Yoga Classes via Zoom for Women with Children who may be feeling Isolation or Financial Stress

\$0.00

STARTING week of January 25!

Ring in the New Year 2021 with a 10 week Zoom Yoga session designed to benefit Body, Mind and Spirit!

Please register for ONE set of ten classes that best works for YOU:

January 25 – March 29: 4-5 pm
Lonnie DeSorcy (Mondays)

January 26 – March 30: 1-2 pm
Rachel Foster (Tuesdays)

January 27 – March 31: 8-9 pm
Sara Hastings-Morris (Wednesdays)





February 4 – April 8: 10-11 am
Karen Hamdon (Thursdays)

Register at:

<https://yoga.ca/product/january-25-april-8-2021-free-yoga-classes-via-zoom-for-women-with-children-who-may-be-feeling-isolation-or-financial-stress/>

Check out free virtual Mental Health Education through Alberta Health Services

Register here: <https://www.cyfcaregivereducation.ca/virtual-education>

			
Register	Register	Register	Register
Caregiver Education Sessions	Parenting Groups	Drop-In Series	Lunch & Learn Webinars

Reach out for support...

Youth Mental Health (Westview Primary Care Network) - call in for an appointment - 780-960 - 9533 ext 221
Community Connector - Simonne Massner - 780-221-7973 Stony Plain and Prab Gill - Spruce Grove and Greater Parkland area 780-217-8701
Youth Mental Health - Northgate Walk In Clinic (AHS - now call in or virtual appointment) 780-342-2700
MOBILE/AFTERHOURS CRISIS TEAM: 780-407-1000
Mobile Addictions Support - Lisa Kimmerly - 780-868-1895
Parenting support (APFA) - Triple P Parenting - Rebecca Plante - 780-963-0549
Adult Crisis Response - 780-342-7777
Support Network Distress Line - 780-482-4357
Adult Mental Health Referral and Treatment - 780-424-2424
Parkland School Division - Family Support - Vicky Mamczasz - vmamczasz@psd70.ab.ca
Sunrise Supports - Dena Davis - dgdavis@psd70.ab.ca

Online Resources

www.kidshelpphone.ca

Teenmentalhealth.org

www.kidshealth.org

www.mindyourmind.ca

www.parenthelpline.ca

www.voomagazine.net