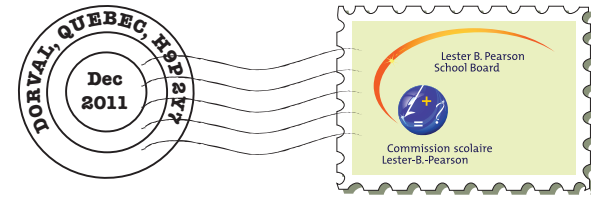




To: *Our colleagues throughout Quebec*
 From: *The Lester B. Pearson School Board, Student Services Department*



Your Feedback

The Center of Excellence for Mental Health has completed an informal survey among the English school boards across the province. We asked you to share your concerns in the area of child and youth mental health. The most significant mental health concerns expressed included:

- Anxiety
- Depression
- Substance Abuse
- Stress & Coping

Thank you to everyone who participated in this Needs Assessment. This information is extremely valuable to us and will help us plan the year.

As educators, what we can do?

We can watch for signs

Signs could include:

- Extreme or abrupt changes in behaviour
- Marked drop in school performance
- Increased absenteeism
- Withdrawal from peers
- Increased physical complaints (headaches, stomach aches)
- Outbursts of extreme emotion (anger, crying)
- Negative comments (e.g., "I can't go on")
- Neglect of physical appearance
- Complaints of feeling overwhelmed, poor concentration, boredom

We can share our concerns

We can discuss concerns with a colleague, a supervisor or a helping professional.

We can be pro-active

As educators, we are in a privileged role and can help tip the balance from risk to resiliency by enhancing protective factors. We can:

- Encourage and model wellness
- Build positive relationships
- Recognize that students can contribute to solutions
- Encourage students to express opinions and make choices
- Stimulate active participation
- Invite guest speakers to talk about mental health

We can help build resiliency

Research has shown that increasing resilience through 4 developmental assets can lead to positive mental health. For more information in this area, click on the following link (Psychology Foundation of Canada: <http://www.psychologyfoundation.org/pdf/publications/ResilienceChildrenBooklet.pdf>).

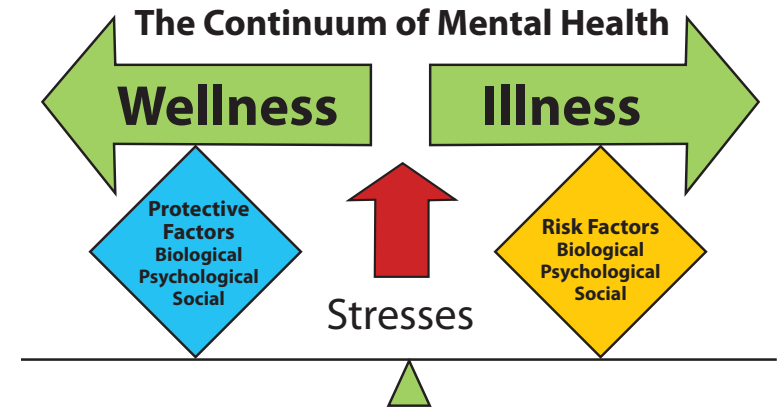
Fighting stigma
 Information is the best weapon against the preconceptions about mental illness. Learning what we can about mental health and mental illness and staying informed is our best defence.

Did you know?

- The majority of people suffering from mental illness don't seek help because of the stigma attached to it. Almost 42% of people with a mental illness are afraid to tell their family about it for fear of being judged. (msss.gouv.qc.ca)

A broader understanding of mental health

It is important to recognize that mental health is not static. It changes over time depending on many factors. Mental health and mental illness are part of an ever changing and dynamic continuum.



Some helpful resources

The Canadian Mental Health Association (www.cmha.ca)

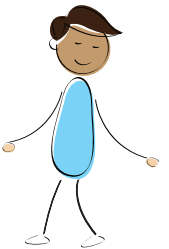
- Mental Health & High School: A guide for helping students, http://www.cmha.ca/data/1/rec_docs/295_mhh_eng_sm.pdf
- Mental Health & High School: A guide for helping teachers: <http://www.cmha.ca/highschool/english.htm>
- Building Resilience: <http://www.mentalhealthweek.ca/data/ResiliencyFactSheet.pdf>
- Stigma & Discrimination: <http://www.mentalhealthweek.ca/data/StigmaandDiscriminationFactSheet.pdf>
- Mental Health for all: <http://www.mentalhealthweek.ca/data/MentalHealthisEveryonesConcernFactSheet.pdf>

Child and Youth Mental Health Information Network

- <http://cymhin.offordcentre.com/index.php>

Mental Health Commission of Canada (www.mentalhealthcommission.ca)

- http://www.mentalhealthcommission.ca/SiteCollectionDocuments/Newsletters/MHHC_Newsletter_Sept2011_ENG.pdf



If you have found this postcard to be helpful and informative, please share it with colleagues. Dissemination of information about mental health is the first step toward promoting better mental health!

For more information about the Center of Excellence for Mental Health, please contact:

Elana Bloom, Ph.D., OPO
 Psychologist-Coordinator, Centre of Excellence for Mental Health,
 514-422-3000 ext. 4125, ebloom02@lbpsb.qc.ca