

Mental Health & Well-being *Programming*

The COVID-19 response has created a documented need for mental health and well-being supports. We hope that the summer 2020 treatment groups below – for students and for caregivers – will be of help to those seeking support.

Virtual and Telephone Support

(Monday to Friday, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.)

Social Workers are available to provide single session and on-going support to students and parent/givers of HWDSB. Referrals for the following mental health and well being support groups can also be accessed through this contact information.

- Call 905-527-5092, ext. 2038
- Text 365-366-7721
- Use the HWDSB Helps app for iOS and Android and located on the We Help website.

Groups for Students

AFFIRM –Secondary

Project Youth AFFIRM is now offering 8 FREE ONLINE sessions of coping skills training for anyone between 14 and 18 years old who identifies as lesbian, gay, bisexual, pansexual, Two Spirit, trans, non-binary, queer and/or questioning your sexuality or gender. The goals of AFFIRM are to decrease unhelpful thoughts, learn stress coping skills to navigate mental health and the COVID-19 pandemic, make healthy choices for your sexual and mental health, and build community with other Two Spirit and LGBTQIA+ youth. Visit www.projectyouthaffirm.org and click "Participate" to fill out the online registration form. This group will be offered in July and August.

AFFIRM –Elementary (Grades 7/8)

Project Youth AFFIRM is now offering 8 FREE ONLINE sessions of coping skills training for anyone between 12 and 13 years old who identifies as lesbian, gay, bisexual, pansexual, Two Spirit, trans, non-binary, queer and/or questioning your sexuality or gender. The goals of AFFIRM are to decrease unhelpful thoughts, learn stress coping skills to navigate mental health and the COVID-19 pandemic, make healthy choices for your sexual and mental health, and build community with other Two Spirit and LGBTQIA+ youth. Visit www.projectyouthaffirm.org and click "Participate" to fill out the online registration form. This group will be offered in July and August.

Virtual Teen Activation Group (TAG)

(Offered in a virtual format through MS Teams, starting July 13.)

TAG is a treatment group for adolescents struggling with depression and anxiety who are not ready to access other treatment options at this time. The group is based on Cognitive Behaviour Therapy (CBT) and Behaviour Activation Therapy. The goal of the group is to help students reduce their depressive and anxious symptoms and increase their overall activity level, so they can access other treatment options or no longer require treatment.

The group engages in education sessions, as well as social and physical activities. Through these sessions and activities, students learn strategies to increase healthy behaviours and enjoyable activities thereby improving their quality of life.

TAG is open to students in grades 9 to 12, who show signs of depression and/or anxiety, who recognize these signs and are ready to take steps to make changes in these areas.

Virtual Chilled

(Virtual offering via MS Teams, also with information for caregivers. Sessions in July and August.)

Chilled is an evidence-based anxiety treatment program for adolescents in grades 7 to 12 who are experiencing worry or anxiety that is impacting their daily functioning. The program focuses on teaching adolescents strategies to find better ways to manage their anxiety. Chilled uses Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) techniques and provides participants with knowledge, practical skills, and tips on how to face fears and overcome worries.

Getting Ready for Grade 9 – Secondary Transition Group

(Runs from the week of August 24 to mid-September, hope for in-person sessions with physical distancing pending public health parameters.)

This is a newly developed group that recognizes the transition from elementary school to secondary is a challenging time that has been made even more overwhelming by COVID-19. This group is for students currently in grade 8 starting high school in September 2020, who are expressing heightened worry and anxiety about integrating into their secondary school, and would benefit from additional supports to navigate this transition.

A Place to Start – Introduction to Mental Health Treatment Group

(Four sessions, runs twice weekly, starting the week of August 17.)

A Place to Start is designed to help support students in grades 7-12, who are struggling with anxiety and mood related issues, but not ready to fully commit to some of our other groups or more intensive one-on-one work. Students who find themselves struggling with self-expression, self-awareness and goal-setting often find it overwhelming to starting working towards change. A Place to Start aims to help students develop a starting point and the “know how” to develop a road map to the changes that they want to see in their lives.

What to Expect – Student Session

(Six session group that runs twice a week, starting the week of August 17.)

One of the most challenging aspects of the pandemic is the unknown – this can be very worrisome for students who are planning to return to school in the fall and are unsure about what to expect. This group is designed for students in grades 7 to 12, who are finding that their worry and anxiety is overwhelming their excitement and willingness to return to class. This group will focus on learning about what they can expect, exploring mood and anxiety related to the new learning environment, and activities to embed their newly learned skills for coping into their school day.

Groups for Caregivers

Virtual Cool Little Kids

(In July and August, with two weekly sessions over a three-week period using the MS Teams platform.)

The Cool Little Kids Program is an anxiety prevention program for primary caregivers of children in Junior Kindergarten to Grade 1 who show signs of being shy, withdrawn or inhibited. The program uses Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) techniques and gives caregivers knowledge, practical skills and tips on how to help their young child manage and overcome anxiety, including how to manage setbacks and maintaining progress after the group ends.

Virtual Families Worrying Less Together

(In July and August, with two weekly sessions over a three-week period using the MS Teams platform.)

Families Worrying Less Together is an anxiety treatment program for primary caregivers of children in grades 3 to 6 who show signs of being shy, worried, excessively fearful or inhibited. The program uses Cognitive Behavioural Therapy Techniques and gives participants knowledge, practical skills, support and tips on how to help their child manage and overcome anxiety. Caregivers will also gain an increased understanding of their own reactions to their child's behaviour, and learn how their own worries about their child can be managed differently.

What to Expect – Caregiver Session

(Sessions offered in afternoons and evenings starting the week of August 17, hopefully in person with physical distancing, pending public health parameters.)

For caregivers, the need to receive clear and consistent messaging about how best to keep our children safe, has been at the forefront during the pandemic. HWDSB is offering 90-minute information sessions for caregivers of an HWDSB student of any age, with the aim to explore caregivers' own stress and worries about sending kids back to school and how best to support your child as you navigate this transition together.