



## Mental Health and Wellbeing

Individual Support, Groups, and Workshops for Children/Youth and  
Parents/Guardians/Caregivers  
July/August 2021

**FOR MORE INFORMATION OR TO REGISTER FOR ANY OF THE SERVICES BELOW PLEASE CONTACT (905) 527-5092 EXT. 2308 OR EMAIL [WEHELP@HWDSB.ON.CA](mailto:WEHELP@HWDSB.ON.CA) OR TEXT 905-963-0066 (STANDARD RATES APPLY) OR USE THE HWDSB HELPS APP FOR IOS AND ANDROID.**

**ALL SERVICES AND SUPPORTS LISTED BELOW ARE FREE OF COST AND AVAILABLE TO ALL HWDSB STUDENTS**

**IF YOU'D LIKE TO STAY UP TO DATE ON MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING PROGRAMMING AND SUPPORTS FOR STUDENTS AND FAMILIES THROUGHOUT THE SUMMER, PLEASE SIGN UP FOR OUR CONFIDENTIAL MAILING LIST! PLEASE EMAIL [WEHELP@HWDSB.ON.CA](mailto:WEHELP@HWDSB.ON.CA) WITH THE SUBJECT LINE: MH MAILING LIST**

### INDIVIDUAL SUPPORT

Individual child and youth mental health and wellbeing support is available over the summer months in the following areas:

- Mental health, such as anxiety or low mood,
- School avoidance and non-attendance,
- Personal or social stressors (ie. adverse childhood experiences, peer relationship, stress, substance use,)
- Family stressors that impact on the student's functioning at school
- Experiencing systemic oppression and discrimination (racism, poverty, colonialization, homophobia/biphobia/transphobia, poverty etc.)
- Crisis, such as imminent risk of harm to self or others.

Individual Support can include consultation, assessment, intervention and support in accessing other Board services such as student/parent groups as well as community services; and may include a child or youth's parents/caregivers and/or community service providers. All services are provided by registered mental health professionals. Services may be provided in person and/or virtually, via MS Teams depending on Public Health requirements.

### GROUPS

**Social and Support Groups for Transgender, Non-binary, Gender Non-conforming and Gendering Questioning Children and Youth**

**curiosity • creativity • possibility**

- **Transcend Youth Group:** Transcend is a social and support group for transgender, non-binary, gender non-conforming and gender questioning children and youth from HWDSB schools. Group meetings are held once/month for two hours and are facilitated by peer leaders with lived experience. Transcend meetings are a welcoming environment which allows youth to develop social connections with others who share some aspect of their identity, so that they can help and support and learn from each other and from the facilitators.

#### **Child/Youth Treatment Groups offered by Social Work Services and Psychological Services**

- **AFFIRM:** Is an 8 session Cognitive Based Therapy informed treatment group specifically for Two Spirit and LGBTQIA+ youth to develop coping skills for anxiety and stress related to experiences of discrimination related to their sexual and gender identities. The goals of AFFIRM are to decrease unhelpful thoughts, feel better about yourself and lives and to make healthy choices for sexual and mental health.
- **Coping with COVID-19:** This skills-based group specifically targets children and youth (Grades 6-12) who are feeling anxious about COVID-19 such that their daily functioning has been negatively impacted. It will explore topics such as: 1) How to take care of myself during COVID-19 2) How are my thoughts, feeling and behaviors connected? 3) What can I do to relax when I'm stressed? 4) How do I cope with my worried thoughts? 5) The benefits of physical activity 6) How do I maintain social connections during this pandemic? 7) Coping with Uncertainty 8) How can mindfulness and relaxation techniques help? In summary, this 7-session group will offer strategies for managing symptoms of stress, low mood and increased worry related to coping with living through a pandemic.
- **TRAILS Anxiety and Depression:** TRAILS (Transforming Research into Action to Improve the Lives of Students) groups are designed to help our children and youth (Grades 6-12) who struggle with moderate symptoms of stress, anxiety, and/or depression by teaching evidence-based cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT) and mindfulness skills. TRAILS A+D aims to help children and youth develop effective coping skills and strategies to help manage their emotions and choose helpful behaviours. This is a 10 week program that may be offered virtually and/or in person, as public health guidelines allow. Children and youth who might benefit from the group are primarily having difficulty with both anxiety and depressive symptoms/low mood that is impairing their functioning. Children and youth interested in participating should have some awareness of their struggles and would be motivated to improve their coping skills. Parent sessions are also available as part of the program, so that parents have a better understanding of their child's mood and anxiety difficulties and effective strategies to continue to improve overall wellbeing. This is a closed group and we are currently accepting applications.
- **Teen Activation Group:** TAG's primary goals are to increase activity levels (thereby decrease/prevent avoidance behaviours), reduce depressive symptoms and to improve mood by having the student take part in positive and rewarding activities. It is aimed at helping students re-engage in their lives through focused activation strategies. These strategies counter the destructive cycle and patterns that can

develop between depressed mood, avoidance, withdrawal, inactivity and worsening symptoms. The purpose of behavioural activation is to increase healthy / pleasurable behaviours thereby improving quality of life, functioning and regaining old routines, or finding new ones. Additional strategies will include: the monitoring of their mood and daily activities, increasing the number of pleasant activities, and increasing positive interactions with their environment.

#### **Social and Support Groups for Parents/Guardians/Caregivers of Transgender, Non-binary, Gender Non-conforming and Gendering Questioning Children and Youth**

- **Transcend Parent Group:** Transcend is a social and support group for parents/guardians/caregivers of transgender, non-binary, gender non-conforming and gender questioning children and youth. Group meetings are held once/month for two hours to provide an opportunity to share the ups, downs and questions about your child's gender identity, gender fluidity and transition with a welcoming group of parents/caregivers, with support from a facilitator with lived experience who works in the Hamilton trans community.

#### **Parents/Guardians/Caregiver Groups offered by Social Work Services and Psychological Services**

- **Families Worrying Less Together (FWLT):** FWLT is a six session evidenced informed parenting program for parents with shy, inhibited, or anxious children. Parenting programs are offered to parents of children in JK-Grade 2 and Grades 3-6. The program is based on Cognitive Behavioral strategies with particular attention to Avoidance, Parental Reactions and Parent Anxiety. Parents gain practical experience in providing proper exposures to allow their children to gain confidence in "facing their fears".
- **Emotion Coaching for Parents and Caregivers – 4 Session Group-** The 4 week Emotion Coaching for Parents and Caregiver group is designed for parents and caregivers of children of any age and developmental stage. Throughout the 4 sessions caregivers will learn about Emotion Coaching, a stance and that can be used to support our loved ones in times of stress and to support emotion regulation. One of the main focuses of the sessions will be on learning and practicing the skill of validation, which is the crucial first step in responding to distress in our loved ones.

#### **WORKSHOPS**

#### **Parents/Guardians/Caregiver Mental Health and Wellbeing Workshops offered by Social Work Services and Psychological Services**

- **Emotion Coaching for Parents and Caregivers –Introductory Workshop:** Emotion Coaching is a communication strategy that can calm the brain in as little as 60 seconds, and help improve relationships. Emotion Coaching has two steps validation (letting someone know want to understand why they feel, think or act a certain way) and support (emotional and practical support using strategies like reassurance, limit-setting, redirecting, collaborative problem-solving, teaching skills, etc.)



- **Mental Health and Well-being – Creating a Mentally-Healthy Home:** This session is intended to help parents and caregivers understand factors related to the mental health and well-being of children and adolescents at home and at school. This session will provide a foundation of common language related to mental health, the importance of early recognition of mental health concerns, and factors that promote well-being. There will be a discussion of strategies that parents and caregivers can use to support the mental health and well-being of children and youth in their care.
- **Mental Health and Well-being - Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder:** This session focuses specifically on ADHD (inattentive type, hyperactive type and combined type). Research regarding the onset and neurobiology of ADHD will be presented. Other difficulties commonly associated with, or resulting from, ADHD will be addressed. Effective strategies that parents and caregivers can use in the home will be discussed.
- **Mental Health and Well-being – Anxiety:** This session focuses on increasing participants' understanding of anxiety. Participants will learn to identify signs and symptoms, understand what they can do to help, and take away some strategies that can be used at home, school, and in the community.
- **Mental Health and Well-being - Low Mood:** This session focuses on increasing participants' understanding of low mood and its impact on students' performance and overall well-being. Participants will gain knowledge about the signs and symptoms associated with low mood, learn how to help, and take away strategies that may be beneficial at home, school, and in the community.

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