PROMOTING
CONNECTEDNESS

A school-based toolkit
SUPPORTING THE FOUNDATIONS FOR A HEALTHY SCHOOL

9-12

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PROMOTING
CONNECTEDNESS

Feeling connected to school improves student well-being. :)

Strategies to Increase Connectedness: Secondary School Toolkit

The purpose of this resource is to provide educators with strategies to increase connectedness and student sense of belonging to their school. Strategies target multiple levels of influence including attitudes and knowledge as well as the social and physical environments.

Highlights of the Toolkit:

- Curriculum related activities that can be used in the classroom and school to enhance student sense of belonging and connectedness.
- Activities to support school and classroom leadership and student engagement.
- School level initiatives to create supportive environments.
- Announcements and health walls.

How was this resource developed?

This toolkit was designed to support *The Foundations for a Healthy School* resource, which recommends that health promotion activities in schools' target each of the components of the framework which include:

- Curriculum teaching and learning
- School and classroom leadership
- Student engagement
- Social and physical environment
- Home, school and community partnerships
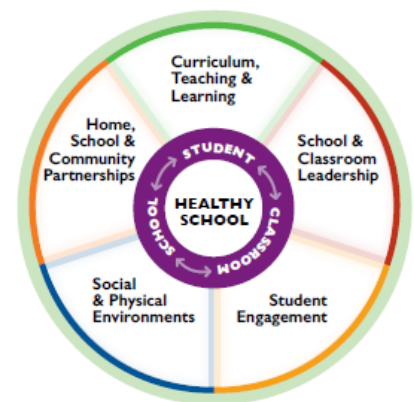
For more information about the Foundations for a Healthy School visit
http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/healthyschools/foundations.html

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The evidence clearly demonstrates that for an initiative in the school setting to be impactful, it has to be multicomponent and delivered over an extended period of time versus single component or "one off" programming. Therefore, to effectively address connectedness, the best action plan is to implement various activities from each component of the Foundations for a Healthy School Framework.

Evidence behind School Connectedness?

According to the 2017 Ontario Student Drug Use and Health Survey, an estimated 19% of students in grades 7 to 12 report their mental health as fair or poor. This is significantly higher than estimates from 2013, 2015 and 2017 (11%, 15% and 17% respectively). Further, the likelihood of reporting poor mental health was found to increase significantly with grade, ranging from 9% among grade 7 students to approximately 26% in grade 12 (OSDUHS Summary Report, 2017 Available at: https://www.camh.ca/-/media/files/pdf---osduhs/mental-health-and-well-being-of-ontario-students-1991-2017---summary-osduhs-report-pdf.pdf)

Mental health concerns during childhood and adolescence are associated with poor academic achievement, substance misuse, an increased risk for poverty, and other adverse outcomes throughout the lifespan (Barry, Clarke, Jenkins & Patel, 2013). According to the 2002 Mental Health and Well-being Canadian Community Health Survey, almost 70% of young adults aged 15–24 years with mood or anxiety disorders reported that their symptoms had started before the age of 15 (Public Health Agency of Canada, 2006). During childhood and adolescence, there is an opportunity to lay the foundation for positive mental health and to reduce the risks for mental health concerns later in life (Barry et al., 2013; Weare & Nind, 2011).

Literature has indicated that enhancing protective factors and reducing risk factors can help children and adolescents avoid multiple behaviors that place them at risk for adverse health and educational outcomes (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2017). Protective factors are defined as "individual or environmental characteristics, conditions or behaviours that reduce the effects of stressful life events to promote social and emotional skills and reduce risks" (Centers for Disease and Control Prevention, 2017). Some protective factors include positive school climate, a sense of belonging, and recognition of achievement (Centre for Addiction and Mental Health, University of Toronto and Toronto Public Health, 2014). Additionally, there is an association between school connectedness and improved emotional health, increased academic achievement, and reduced risk-taking behaviours (Chapman, Buckley, Sheehan & Shochet, 2013).

The Pan-Canadian Joint Consortium of School Health defines school connectedness as "the extent to which students perceive that they are accepted, respected, included and supported by others in the educational environment" (Morrison & Peterson, 2013). According to the Centre for Disease Control and Prevention, "school connectedness is the belief by students that adults and peers in the school care about their learning as well as about them as individuals" (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2009). *The National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health conducted in the United States, found that students' sense of school connectedness was one of the strongest protective factors of youth high-risk behaviors, such as substance use, violence, and suicidality (McNeely, Nonnemaker & Blum, 2002; Resnick, Bearman, Blum, et al.,1997). School connectedness has also been shown to be a protective factor for adolescent sexual and reproductive health (Markham, Lormand, Gloppen, Peskin, Flores, Low, & House, 2010).* Since school connectedness has been shown in the research literature to be a predictor for mental health (Kidger, Araya, Donovan & Gunnell, 2012), enhancing the implementation of activities to increase school connectedness and sense of belonging can be part of an overall strategy at schools to improve the positive mental health for children and youth.

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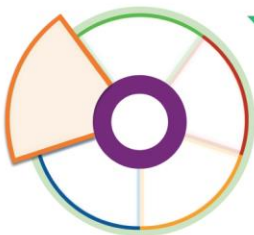
Curriculum, Teaching and Learning

- [Announce It!](#)
- [Food 4 Thought](#)
- [Self-Care Challenge](#)

School and Classroom Leadership

- [Make & Take](#)

Home, School and Community Partnerships

- [Building Mental Well-Being and Connectedness into After School and/or Evening Events](#)
- [Therapy Dogs](#)

Social and Physical Environments

- [Chill Room](#)
- [Connecting Through Art](#)
- [Random Acts of Kindness](#)
- [Welcoming Environments](#)

Student Engagement

- [Post-Its with Purpose!](#)
- [Student Engagement](#)

RELATED FOUNDATIONS

- Student Engagement
- Social & Physical Environments
- Home, School and Community Partnership

RESOURCES:
- Announce It!
- Example Announcements and Tweets
- Follow @MLSchoolhealth on Twitter & Instagram

.

Announce It!

ACTIVITY GOAL: To increase awareness and knowledge about connectedness and mental well-being.

ACTIVITY IDEAS:

- Use communication strategies such as daily announcements, posters, and social media to raise awareness about connectedness.

- Visit Announce It! on the website for the Middlesex-London Health Unit. This will provide you with access to examples of announcements, posters and social media messages that you can use for your school.

- These communication strategies should be a part of a comprehensive healthy school approach.

Curriculum Connections

- Grade 9: C 2.2 Relationships – skills and strategies
- Grade 10: C 1.1 Mental Health – factors that enhance
             C 3.5 Relationships – effects on self and others
- Grade 11: C 3.4 Skills for stressful situations
             C 3.5 Mental illness – reducing stigma

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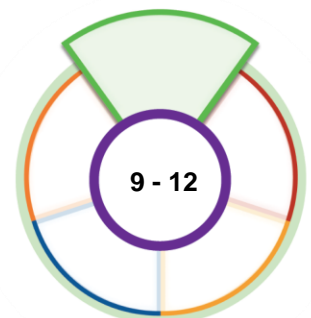
RELATED FOUNDATIONS:

- Social & Physical Environments
- Student Engagement
- Home, School & Community Partnerships

RESOURCES:

- Public Health Nurse
- Health Unit Dietitian

#FOOD4THOUGHT

ACTIVITY GOAL: To bring together caring adults and female identified students in the school community to foster the development of trusting relationships.
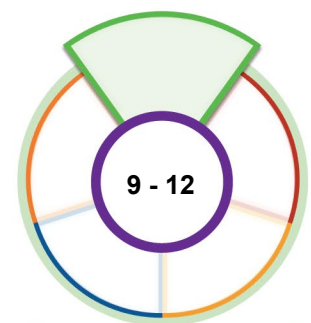
PROGRAM OVERVIEW:

- #Food4Thought is a 4-6 week program that allows students to come together, prepare a meal and share what they have prepared with caring adults. More importantly, the program encourages the participants to engaged in conversations with caring adults about topics that are important to them (e.g., healthy relationships).

- #Food4Thought uses cooking and food preparation as an avenue for the participants collaborate and develop relationships not only with one another, but the caring adults running the program. The program and uses a "conversation box" to gather anonymous thoughts and questions for discussion topics. As the group develops rapport and trust these conversations may happen naturally while sharing the meal.

HOW TO RUN THIS PROGRAM IN YOUR SCHOOL:

1. Talk with your school principal about running the program, potential locations and funding necessary to run it.
2. Identify trusting adults to be trained and participate.
3. Speak with your public health nurse about training opportunities.

Curriculum Connections
- Grade 9:   C 2.2 Relationships – skills and strategies
             C 3.4 Social Influences; decision making and communication skills
- Grade 10: C 1.1 Mental Health – factors that enhance
- Grade 11: C 3.4 Skills for stressful situations
             C 3.5 Mental illness – reducing stigma
- Grade 12: C 2.3 Developing resilience, making healthy choices

9 - 12

#FOOD4THOUGHT

COOK.EAT.CHAT

OBJECTIVE

To provide a safe space for female identified students to build relationships with caring adults including teachers, social worker, and Public Health Nurses and Dietitians.

Supports:

Middlesex London Health Unit

- Public Health Nurses
- Public Health Dietitians

School Supports:

- Teachers and /or Administration
- School Social Worker
- Student Success Teachers

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#Food4Thought Program:

- A 4-6-week program. All recipes are non-cook or can be made in a skillet. Recipes include a vegetable or fruit and often a plant-based protein.
- Recipes, equipment and shopping lists needed to run the program are provided.
- 1/2-day training will be provided at your location for all facilitators who will be involved with the program (e.g., social worker, teachers, administration, etc...).
- Equipment list to facilitate the program is provided. The cost of the equipment is estimated at ~ 215.00.
- The average weekly food cost is ~$20. Total food cost for 6 weeks is ~$120.00.

RELATED FOUNDATIONS:

- Student Engagement
- Social & Physical Environments

RESOURCES:

- Self-Care Calendar
- Posters, announcements and social media posts to advertise event
- Prizes for participation

Self-Care Challenge

ACTIVITY GOAL: To challenge students to take care of themselves and connect with others.

ACTIVITY INSTRUCTIONS:

1. The Self-Care Challenge is a week-long activity. Each day of the week has a theme (e.g., Mental Health Monday, Treat Yo'Self Tuesday, Wellness Wednesday, Thoughtful Thursday and Feel-Good Friday).
2. This activity may be helpful during stressful times of the school year (i.e. exams).
3. Involve student led groups such as the mental wellness committee or leadership class to organize and promote activity.
4. The challenge can be advertised via TV monitors, announcements, posters and school social media (Twitter, Instagram, etc.).
5. Distribute Self-Care Challenge Worksheets either at lunch or in class.
   - Encourage students to complete the self-care activities each day of the week and check off the activities that they complete.
6. At the end of the challenge, celebrate achievements and give prizes to students who participated.
   - Have all completed worksheets submitted for a draw or have a class mental health day where students select activities to promote well being.

Curriculum Connection

- Grade 9:   C 2.2 Relationships – skills and strategies
- Grade 10: C 1.1 Mental Health – factors that enhance
             C 3.5 Relationships – effects on self and others
- Grade 11: C 3.4 Mental Illness – skills for stressful situations
             C 3.5 Mental Illness- reducing Stigma
- Grade 12: C 2.3 Developing resilience, making healthy choices
             C 2.5 Maintaining health and well-being when independent

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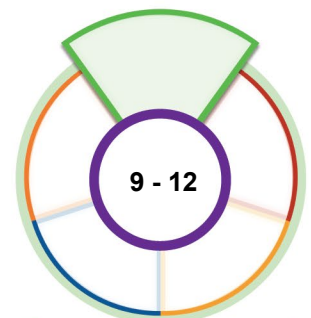
Self-Care Challenge Chart

Mental Health Monday	*Treat Yo'self* Tuesday	*Wellness* Wednesday	*Thoughtful* Thursday	*Feel-Good* Friday
Hug a friend	Open a door or give a high five to friends at school	Sit down and talk to your parents about school today	Ask someone how they are doing	Smile & connect
Go for a walk with a friend	Dance to your favourite song	Do 20 squats/ lunges	Practice your balance	Take the stairs today
Take time to relax today… read a book or listen to music	Write a positive affirmation on a post it- somewhere you can see it each day	Sleep enough for you	Give yourself time to be alone & unwind	Compliment yourself while looking in the mirror
Carry a reusable water bottle and stay hydrated!	Eat 7 servings of vegetables or fruit today	Swap coffee or pop for herbal tea or water	Eat a colourful snack between meals	Pack a balanced lunch today
Review your notes for your hardest class	Ask a teacher for extra help on something you don't understand	Organize your backpack	Plan the night before to have all your things for the morning	Do something fun with friends to energize yourself!

🟥 Social 🟦 Getting Active 🟧 Mindfulness 🟩 Nutrition 🟪 Organize

Adapted with permission from Jack.org/ Brecsia chapter (Jack.org is a national network of young leaders transforming the way Canadians think about mental health).

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RELATED FOUNDATIONS:

- Social & Physical Environments
- Student Engagement

RESOURCES:

- Funding to purchase materials
- Teacher supervision
- Stress Ball
- Buttons
- Glitter Jar
- Finger Fidgets
- Exam Prep Bags

Make & Take

ACTIVITY GOAL: To promote student well-being and connectedness.

ACTIVITY IDEAS:

- With a group of students either from a leadership class or committee decide on a good time of year to promote mental well being (i.e., exams, midterms, mental health week).
- Provide students with the opportunity to create a stress-reliever during class time, or lunch time.
- Crafts should be simple to make and take < 30 minutes. Pick a calm, quiet space and provide additional mental-health and well-being resources and supports for students.

Some ideas include:

- o Stress Balls
- o Buttons
- o Glitter Jars
- o Finger Fidgets
- o Exam Prep Bags

Curriculum Connections

- Grade 9:   C 2.2 Relationships – skills and strategies
- Grade 10: C 1.1 Mental Health – factors that enhance
- Grade 11: C 3.4 Skills for dealing with stressful situations
                   C 3.5 Mental illness – reducing stigma
- Grade 12: C 1.3 Skills and strategies for evolving relationships

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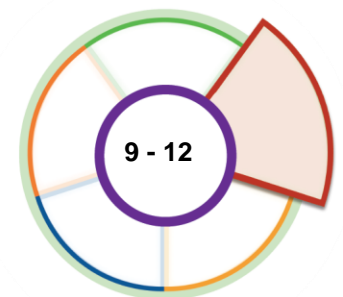
Stress Balls

Materials:

Baby socks or non latex balloons	Rice or dried lentils	Funnel/ Spoons
Elastic or ribbon	Scissors	Large bowl

Instructions:

1. Fill baby socks with rice or lentils (can be filled to student's preference)

2. Tie off baby sock with an elastic or ribbon

Buttons

For this activity please contact your public health nurse or the school board to borrow a button maker*

Materials:

Button Maker	Printed Templates	Blank Templates
Markers/ Stickers	Scissors	

Instructions:

1. Borrow Button Maker

2. Provide students with pre-designed mental well being button templates OR print blank templates for students to design themselves

3. Push templated into button

Glitter Jars

Materials:

Water	Kettle	Clear glue
Glitter Glue	Glitter/ Sparkles	Mason Jars
Oven mitts	Food colouring	Pitcher of water

Instructions:

1. Clean Mason Jars

2. Boil Water (with kettle)

3. Put 2-3 tbsp of clear glue in the bottom of the jar (the more clear glue, the longer the glitter will take to fall)

4. Empty 1 tube of glitter glue into the jar

5. Fill Mason Jar ½ with hot water

6. Add additional loose glitter or sparkles (per students' discretion)

7. Add 1-2 drops of food colouring

8. Seal jar and shake well (using oven mitt)

9. Open jar and fill with room temperature water

10. Seal and voila!

In case you don't get any pics….

Finger Fidget

Materials:

Metal Key Rings (1-1.5)"   Pony Beads   Staple remover

Instructions:

1. Open the key chain using fingers (or staple remover)

2. Place pony beads around key chain (as many as the student wishes, works best with 3-4)

3. Join 2 or more keychains with beads together

Exam Prep Bags

Suggested Materials:

Pencils or Pens	Eraser	Ear Plus
Brown Paper Bag	Sticky Notes	Small Mandala
Personalized note	1-2 pieces of gum	Resource Card

Instructions:

Depending on student group, or class you could create personalized bags for all grade 9 students.

1. Give leadership class gr. 9 homeroom class list
2. Have students create a personalized bag for each student with their name, and an personalized note about succeeding during exams
3. Pre-stuff other items in bag
4. Deliver bags to grade 9 homerooms

As make and take activity:

1. Set up a table in a high traffic area, or area that will work for event
2. Place each item in separate containers so students can assemble their own bag (like buffet line)
3. Encourage students to take each item including resource card

Post-its with Purpose!

ACTIVITY GOAL: To have students share thoughts, ideas and strategies with their peers to encourage student's well-being.
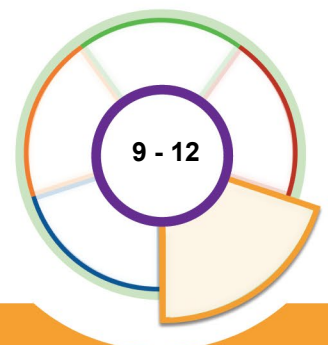
ACTIVITY INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Students from a school committee (e.g., Healthy Schools/Mental Health) encourage their peers to write down how they cope with stress, suggestions to improve mental well-being in school, what they are most looking forward too (e.g., over school break), study tips or strategies, etc.
2. Students can then take this opportunity to engage their peers with other examples of how they can positively cope with stress.
3. After completion, the poster can be placed in a busy area of the school such as the library for students to see.
4. Depending on budget, students who participate can submit their name to win a prize.
5. This activity can be used in combination with other mental health activities such as therapy dog visits.
6. After reviewing all the suggestions, implement one of the ideas over the lunch-period or after school to promote well-being (e.g., movie day, physical activity in the gym, new club).

Curriculum Connections:

- Grade 9:   C 2.2 Relationships – skills and strategies
- Grade 10: C 1.1 Mental Health – factors that enhance
- Grade 11: C 2.1 Strategies for making safer choices
         C 3.4 Skills for dealing with stressful situations
- Grade 12: C 2.5 Maintaining health and wellbeing when independent

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Student Engagement

ACTIVITY GOAL: To create opportunities for youth to engage in youth-initiated and youth-led activities and play a key role in decision making.

Background: Students are arguably the most important stakeholders in the education system and thus student engagement should be at the heart of a healthy school. Student engagement is *"the extent to which students identify with and value their learning; feel a sense of belonging at school; and are informed about, engaged with and empowered to participate in and lead academic and non-academic activities"* (Foundations for a Healthy School). To learn more about Youth Engagement, explore the Pan-Canadian Joint Consortium for School Health Youth Engagement Toolkit http://www.jcsh-cces.ca/index.php/resources/youth-engagement.

Benefits of Youth Engagement: When students are given the opportunity to contribute to their learning, they derive a sense of belonging and connectedness to the school community and gain feelings of competence and satisfaction. Other positive outcomes include lower rates of substance use and depression, reduced dropout rates in school, higher academic performance and lower rates of conflict with the law (Centre of Excellence for Youth Engagement, 2007). The illustration below is Hart's Ladder of Youth Participation. When working with youth, the goal is to work at the top of the ladder.
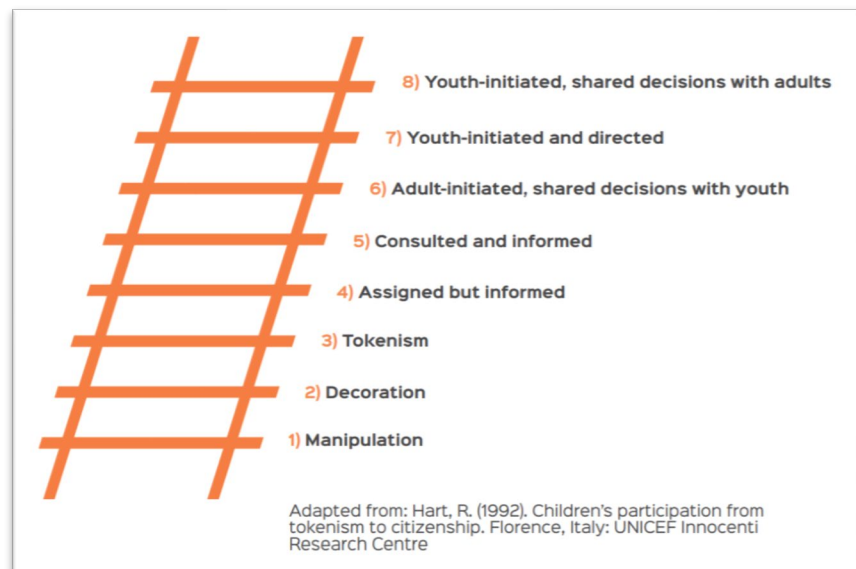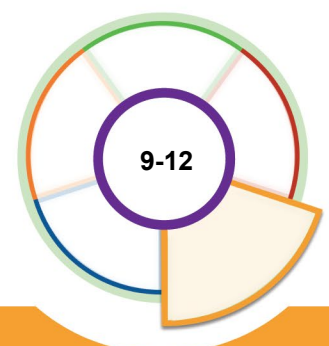

8) Youth-initiated, shared decisions with adults
7) Youth-initiated and directed
6) Adult-initiated, shared decisions with youth
5) Consulted and informed
4) Assigned but informed
3) Tokenism
2) Decoration
1) Manipulation

Adapted from: Hart, R. (1992). Children's participation from tokenism to citizenship. Florence, Italy: UNICEF Innocenti Research Centre

Image source: https://ymhac.rnao.ca/sites/default/files/2016-10/Harts%20Laddar.pdf

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ACTIVITY IDEAS:

- Establish a school committee involving students, school staff, public health nurse and/or parent representatives (e.g., Healthy School/Wellness/Safe School Committee, etc.), or Leadership class.
- Define the purpose of the committee. Emphasize the importance of student voice and the development of leadership skills as an integral part of the success of the committee.
- Review roles of committee members that align with youth engagement.
  - *Adult Role:*
    - Value youth as an asset in the school, empower students, and give them the skills and confidence to contribute equally to decisions
    - Encourage students to plan activities that align with their identified goal. For example, if the goal is to 'reduce substance use', all of the activities planned during the school year should target this and build on each other. Refer to the activities in this resource for ideas.
    - Recognize student contributions as school leaders and celebrate accomplishments.
    - Build trusting and authentic relationships
  - *Student Role:*
    - The role of the youth is to take initiative and be actively involved in making decisions. This may include, scheduling and leading meetings as well as organizing and implementing activities.
    - Be confident in expressing your thoughts and ideas.

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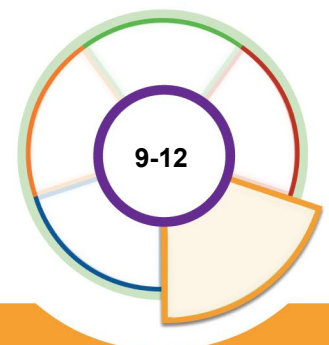
- Curriculum, Teaching & Learning
- School & Classroom Leadership
- Social & Physical Environments
- Home, School and Community Partnership

RESOURCES:

- Pan-Canadian Joint Consortium for School Health-Youth Engagement

- RNAO Youth Mental Health and Addiction Champions Initiative: Hart's Ladder

Student Engagement

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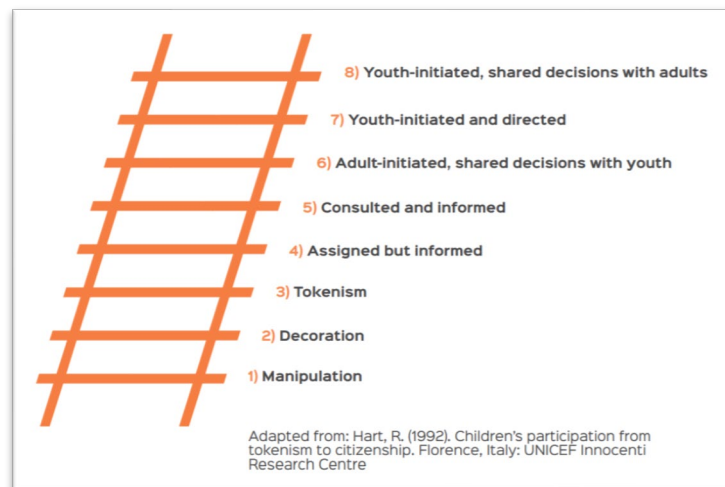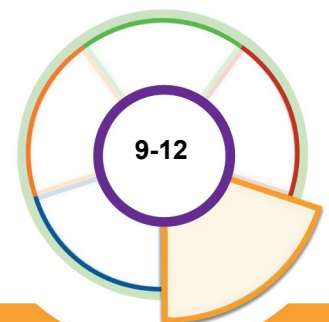

8) Youth-initiated, shared decisions with adults
7) Youth-initiated and directed
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1) Manipulation

Adapted from: Hart, R. (1992). Children's participation from tokenism to citizenship. Florence, Italy: UNICEF Innocenti Research Centre

Image source: https://ymhac.rnao.ca/sites/default/files/2016-10/Harts%20Laddar.pdf

Curriculum Connections
- Grade 9:   C1.3 Resilience-protective and risk factors
- Grade 10: C1.2 Effects on health and well-being
- Grade 11: C2.2 Connections between substance use, addictive behaviour, and physical and mental health; making safer choices
           C3.3 Risk factors and supports
- Grade 12: C1.2 Consequences of substance misuse-short-term, long-term, legal
           C2.3 Developing resilience, making healthy choices

9-12

ACTIVITY IDEAS:

- Establish a school committee involving students, school staff, public health nurse and/or parent representatives (e.g., Healthy School/Wellness/Safe School Committee, etc.), or Leadership class.
- Define the purpose of the committee. Emphasize the importance of student voice and the development of leadership skills as an integral part of the success of the committee.
- Review roles of committee members that align with youth engagement.
  - *Adult Role:*
    - Value youth as an asset in the school, empower students, and give them the skills and confidence to contribute equally to decisions
    - Encourage students to plan activities that align with their identified goal. For example, if the goal is to 'reduce substance use', all of the activities planned during the school year should target this and build on each other. Refer to the activities in this resource for ideas.
    - Recognize student contributions as school leaders and celebrate accomplishments.
    - Build trusting and authentic relationships
  - *Student Role:*
    - The role of the youth is to take initiative and be actively involved in making decisions. This may include, scheduling and leading meetings and organizing and implementing activities.
    - Be confident in expressing your thoughts and ideas.

9-12

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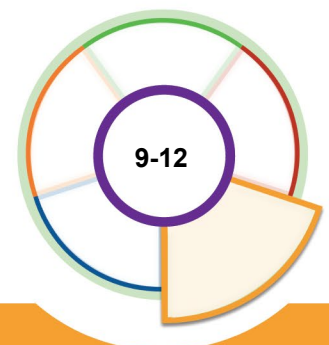
RELATED FOUNDATIONS:

- Student Engagement

RESOURCES:

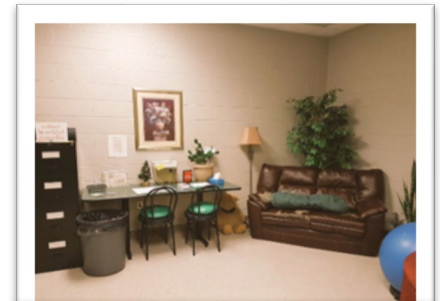- Healthy snacks
- Comfortable furniture
- Calm Music
- Mental Health information (e.g., Stress Information
- Colouring pages
- Markers/pencil crayons

Chill Room

ACTIVITY GOAL: To create a calming environment where students have the opportunity relax, connect with a peers or staff, in a safe and non-judgmental space.

ACTIVITY IDEAS:

- The Chill Room can be located in a variety of spaces within your school such as a resource room or a corner in the library.

- Your Chill Room can be open all day, during the lunch hour or during certain periods of the day. The Chill Room can be a year-long activity that runs daily, weekly or key times of the school year the year (i.e. exam periods).

- Low lighting and calm music are recommended. You may also choose to provide students with healthy snack options.

- The room should be staffed by an engaging teacher to support students.

- The room should have information and resources to support mental well-being (i.e. study tip sheets, stress information, community organizations).

Curriculum Connections:

- Grade 9:   C 3.2 Mental health concerns – warning signs and responses
- Grade 10: C 1.1 Mental health – factors that enhance
- Grade 11: C 3.4 Skills for dealing with stressful situations
- Grade 12: C 2.5 Maintaining health and wellbeing when independent

9 - 12
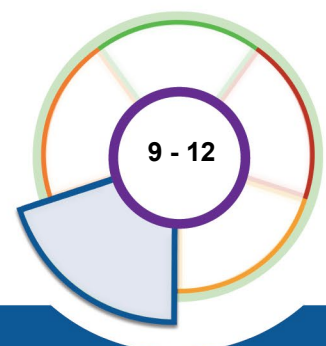
RELATED FOUNDATIONS:
- School & Classroom Leadership
- Student Engagement

RESOURCES:
- Banner paper
- Markers/Paint

Connecting Through Art

ACTIVITY GOAL: To engage the school community through art to foster a sense of connectedness and belonging.

ACTIVITY EXAMPLES:

In addition to stress reduction, colouring this giant art work can also help to increase connectedness as many students are coming together to contribute to a larger school wide activity.

Giant Mandala
- Have your school's Healthy School Committee or art class draw the outline of a Mandala on large banner.
- Post it on a wall in the hallway or on a large table.
- Invite all students to participate in colouring a portion of the art work.
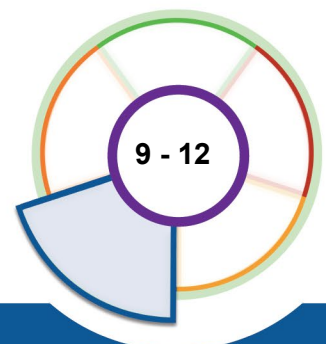
School of Fish
- Cut out enough fish to give one to each student or students passing by in the hall.
- Have students write their name or initials on the fish and colour/design them to represent themselves.
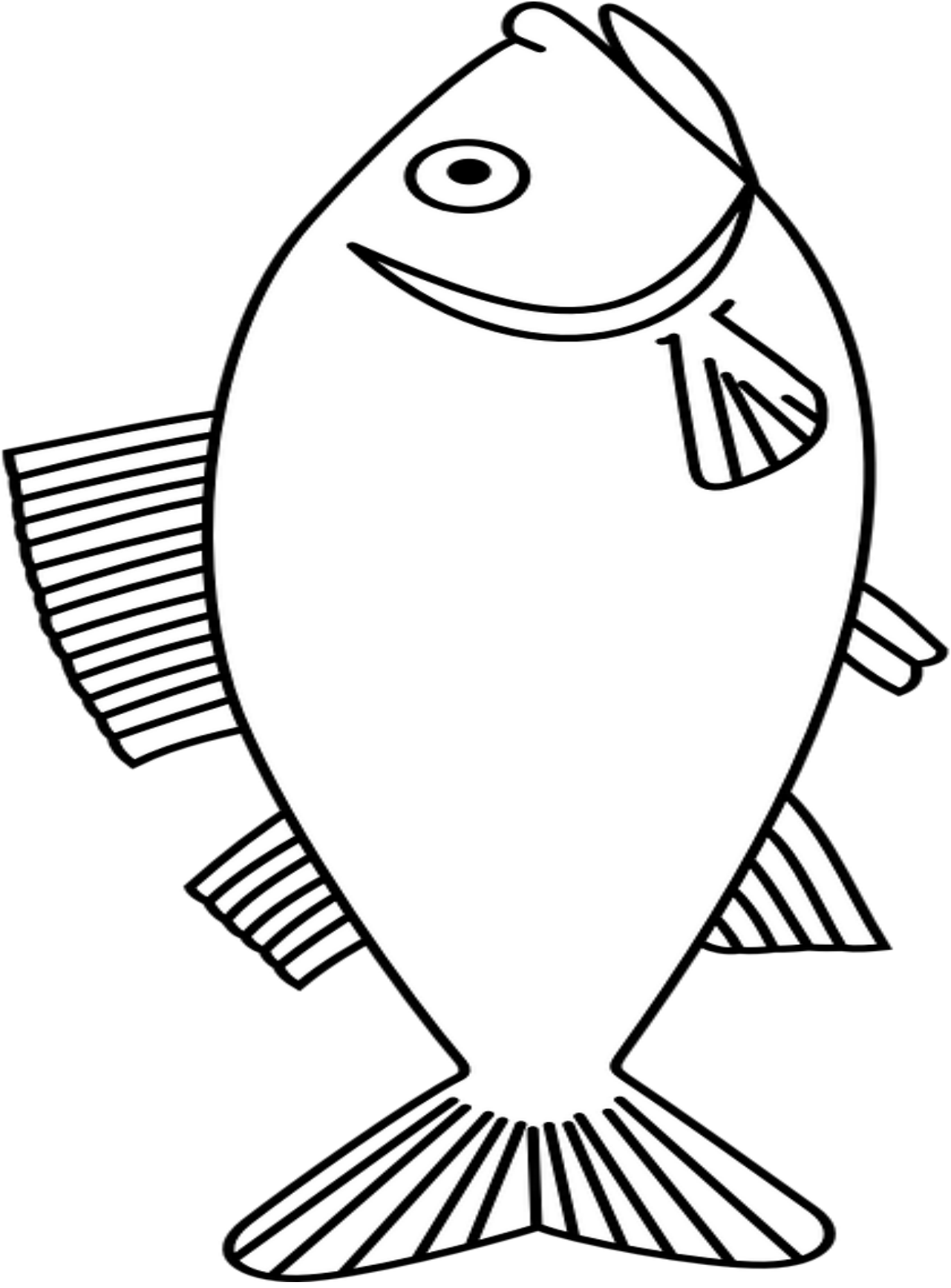- Collect all of the fish and display them together in the hallway.

School Mascot:

- Print out school mascot or something that represents the school mascot on a small piece of paper (i.e. paws).
- Provide one cut-out to each student in homeroom and provide dedicated time at the end of homeroom period to decorate.
- Encourage students to add comments, thoughts, sign or answer a specific question.
- Assemble all artwork and display creatively in the school.

Curriculum Connections:

- Grade 9:   C 2.2 Relationships – skills and strategies
- Grade 10: C 1.1 Mental health – factors that enhance
- Grade 11: C 3.5 Mental illness – reducing stigma
- Grade 12: C 1.3 Skills and strategies for evolving relationships
              C 2.5 Maintaining health and wellbeing when independent

9 - 12

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Random Acts of Kindness

RELATED FOUNDATIONS:

- Student Engagement

RESOURCES:

- Post-It Notes
- Spinning Wheel
- Plink-O
- RAK Cards
- Random Acts of Kindness Ideas

ACTIVITY GOAL: To promote a positive caring environment within the school community by encouraging students to complete acts of kindness for one another.

ACTIVITY EXAMPLES:

Positive Message Sticky Notes

- Students write positive messages or compliments on sticky notes and leave them on lockers around the school.

Anonymous Compliments

- Encourage students to write a compliment about someone else in the school anonymously.
- Read the compliments on the announcements, post to school social media or create a video (see below).
- Watch Carroll High School's students read their Third Party Compliments! https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o-2dGZvN608

Random Acts of Kindness Games

- Use a game like Plink-O, Spinning Wheel or Giant Jenga to engage students.
- Have students complete a random act of kindness as part of the game.
- If students complete their Random Act of Kindness they can be entered to win a prize or receive a prize on the spot.

For more ideas, visit https://www.randomactsofkindness.org/kindness-ideas

Curriculum Connections:

- Grade 9:   C 2.2 Relationships - skills and strategies
- Grade 10: C 1.1 Mental Health - factors that enhance
- Grade 11: C 3.4 Skills for dealing with stressful situations
- Grade 12: C 2.5 Maintaining health and wellbeing when independent

9 - 12

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RELATED FOUNDATIONS:

- Student Engagement

RESOURCES:
- Sticky notes
- Markers
- Positive message posters

Welcoming Environments

ACTIVITY GOAL: To create an inviting school space where students, staff and parents feel connected, welcomed and feel a sense of belonging.

ACTIVITY IDEAS:

When students first walk into the school, the environment should feel inviting. Ways to create this are:

- Student art work or create a welcome sign that is placed in the front entry way
- Door Greeter: A teacher, VP or Principal can stand at the door to greet students as they enter the school or classroom.
- Positive message posters
- Sticky notes with positive messages on bathroom mirrors
- Positive messaging painted as murals, stair risers, bathroom stalls

Curriculum Connections

- Grade 9:   C 2.2 Relationships – skills and strategies
- Grade 10: C 1.1 Mental Health – factors that enhance
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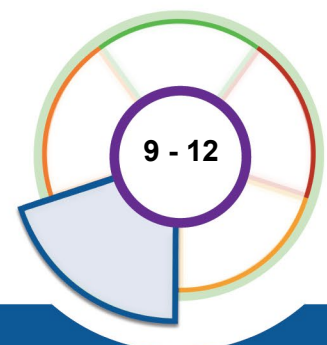
Hey you… ya you,
You are …..

Amazing!

**Take what you need
& pass it on!**

| you are beautiful | you are worth it | you can do it | you are loved | you are talented | your smile is beautiful | you are appreciated | you can make it happen | you are inspiring |

RELATED FOUNDATIONS:
- Curriculum Teaching & Learning
- Social & Physical Environments
- Student Engagement

RESOURCES:
- Volunteers
- Guest Speakers
- Food
- Brochures
- Pamphlets
- Post-its With Purpose Activity
- Make and Take Activity

# Building Mental Well-Being and Connectedness into After School and/or Evening Events

ACTIVITY GOAL: To encourage connectedness a sense of belonging and amongst youth and their families to the school community.

ACTIVITY IDEAS

- Mental Well-being is an important piece of school culture and utilizing after school events that may involve parents is a great way to showcase the efforts related to student mental well-being.

- Include Mental Well-Being activities in events such as: parent teacher interviews, grade 9 parent night, welcome BBQs, grade 8 open house night, etc.

- Activities could include:

  o Showcasing art, music, school clubs and school-wide mental well-being efforts.
  o School supports presenting their roles and contact information
  o Brochures and information available that relate to mental-well being, study tips, etc.
  o 'Make and Take' activity for well-being
  o Post-its with purpose activity
  o Student mentors or leaders to speak with incoming or new students about the school environment and their experience

Curriculum Connections:

- Grade 9:   C 2.2 Relationships – skills and strategies
- Grade 10: C 1.1 Mental health – factors that enhance
- Grade 11: C 3.4 Skills for dealing with stressful situations
- Grade 12: C 1.3 Skills and strategies for evolving relationships
             C 2.5 Maintaining health and well-being when independent

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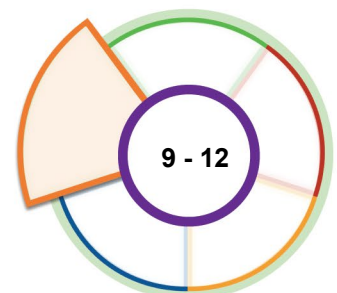
RELATED FOUNDATIONS:

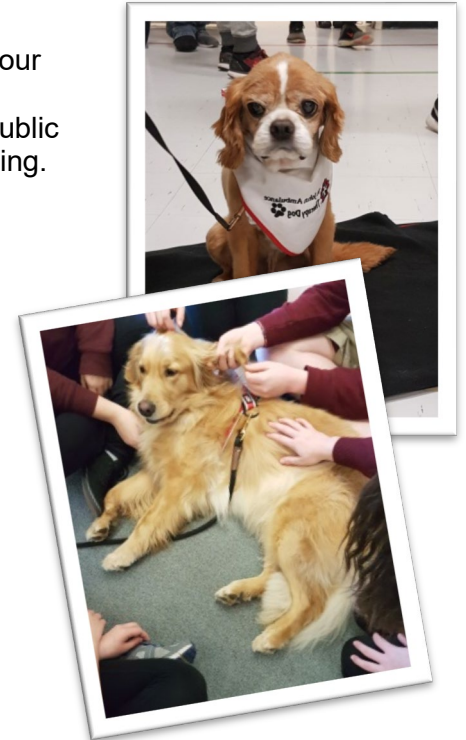- Social & Physical Environments
- Student Engagement

RESOURCES:

- Volunteers
- St. John's Ambulance
- Post-its With Purpose
- Make and Take Activity

Therapy Dogs

ACTIVITY GOAL: To reduce stress by connecting with therapy dogs and other peers who are participating in the event.

ACTIVITY INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Book the therapy dogs to come to your school by contacting St. John's Ambulance directly or talk to your Public Health Nurse for assistance in booking.

2. Ensure the space booked for the Therapy Dogs is large enough to accommodate a large number of visiting students.

3. Therapy dog visits present an excellent opportunity to provide additional information and increase awareness about mental wellness.
   - Use the 'Post-its with Purpose' Poster Board and ask students to contribute by adding their ideas on how they reduce their stress
   - Have a 'Make and Take' station where students can create personal resources (i.e. stress ball, fidget toy, de-stress kits, etc.)

4. Advertise the event through posters and announcements!

Curriculum Connections:

- Grade 9: C 2.2 Relationships – skills and strategies
- Grade 10: C 1.1 Mental health – factors that enhance
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9 - 12