

Student Mental Health Strategic Plan 2023-2026



FOUNDATIONS

Leadership Commitment	Engagement & Collaboration	Vision & Strategy	Infrastructure	Processes & Protocols	Evidence & Monitoring	Internal & External Communications
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Mental Health Mission

The York Catholic District School Board is committed to creating teaching and learning environments that promote positive mental health for everyone and reflect an understanding of all factors that impact on student mental health (e.g., race, culture, abilities, social identities). The Student Mental Health Strategy will build structure and processes, raise awareness, build capacity and provide an evidence based/ informed approach to mental health.

Mental Health Vision

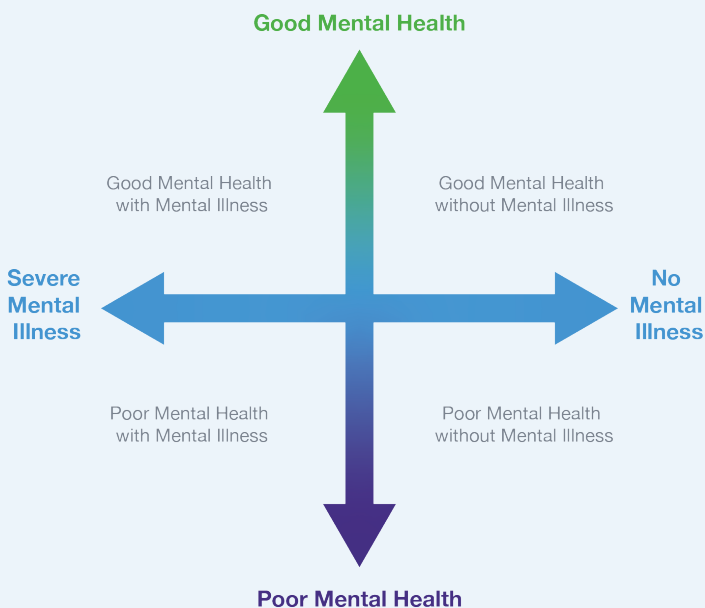
At YCDSB, our students grow to realize their God-given potential as resilient and collaborative citizens, filled with faith, hope and compassion. Anchored in our Catholic values, our schools will be mentally healthy schools that promote well being and achievement for all.



Mental Health Values and Commitments

Our strategy will enable early identification, timely and personalized response to students' needs, as well as mental health promotion, prevention, intervention and postvention strategies.

Building mental health awareness, literacy and expertise and addressing the challenges of stigma are key priorities. Emphasis is on the alignment of existing resources and strengthening relationships with other stakeholders within the YCDSB (e.g Human Rights and Equity Office, Religious Education & Family Life Consultants, Curriculum Consultants) and in community partnerships through collaborative communication and the promotion of a shared language.



What is Mental Health?

Everyone has mental health. It might be helpful to think about mental health as a range or continuum. On one end is the optimal, on-top-of-the-world mental health. On the other is poor mental health.

Not everyone has a mental illness. Mental illness, like mental health, can fluctuate. On one end of the continuum is no diagnosable mental illness (minimal or no symptoms). On the other end is severe mental illness.

When the mental health and mental illness continuums are put together, they create a "dual continuum".

Foundations for Effective School Mental Health

At the center of our strategy is every student. Our goal is to see every student as unique with their own strengths, needs, community and experience. We understand that each student is grounded in that and we aim to build upon their faith to support all our students. The mental health strategy emphasizes that school mental health supports must be differentiated, identity affirming and culturally responsive, in a way that engages, amplifies and responds to the needs of racialized and marginalized students.

Successful and sustainable implementation of this strategy is dependent on key elements. These are highlights of what we have implemented at YCDSB:

LEADERSHIP COMMITMENT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The YCDSB has embedded mental health and wellbeing into the multi year strategic plan Human Resources is committed to providing training around supporting staff mental health Ongoing training in suicide prevention and intervention and trauma informed practices
PROCESSES & PROTOCOLS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Established processes and protocols for pathways to support and crisis response Continuous monitoring and reviewing to ensure these are well communicated and efficient Alignment with PPM 169
VISION & STRATEGY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Shared vision and strategy which was informed by survey completed by students, staff and parents. Endorsed by staff mental health advisory committee and supported by administration and trustees
INFRASTRUCTURE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mental health leadership team works together with the HREA, Curriculum department, Religious Education & Family Life Consultants and researcher to review data, select, monitor and report on initiatives
INTERNAL & EXTERNAL COMMUNICATION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Established websites (internal and external) and social media presence, MH ambassadors in each school acting as liaisons Collaboration with communications to share/align messages to parent community Provide reports to trustees yearly or as requested
ENGAGEMENT & COLLABORATION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The mental health team engages and collaborates regularly with: MH ambassadors, Student MH ambassadors, Staff Mental Health Advisory Committee, community partners, PA Day Committee, NTIP, subject council, YCPIC, curriculum department, Indigenous education consultants, ELL teachers, guidance, chaplains, pathways consultants
EVIDENCE & MONITORING	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regular review of data from the climate survey, census and board scans to identify areas of need and to monitor trends and evaluate our initiatives Monitor the uptake of professional development and provide follow up support for educators to monitor implementation as needed Psychotherapeutic support is monitored through the use of measurement based care to ensure we are providing the most appropriate and effective intervention
FAITH & WELLNESS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mental health practices, where possible, will be designed to align with Catholic teachings, values, and virtues. This is for the purpose of supporting the spiritual and faith development of all students and staff in nurturing positive mental health.

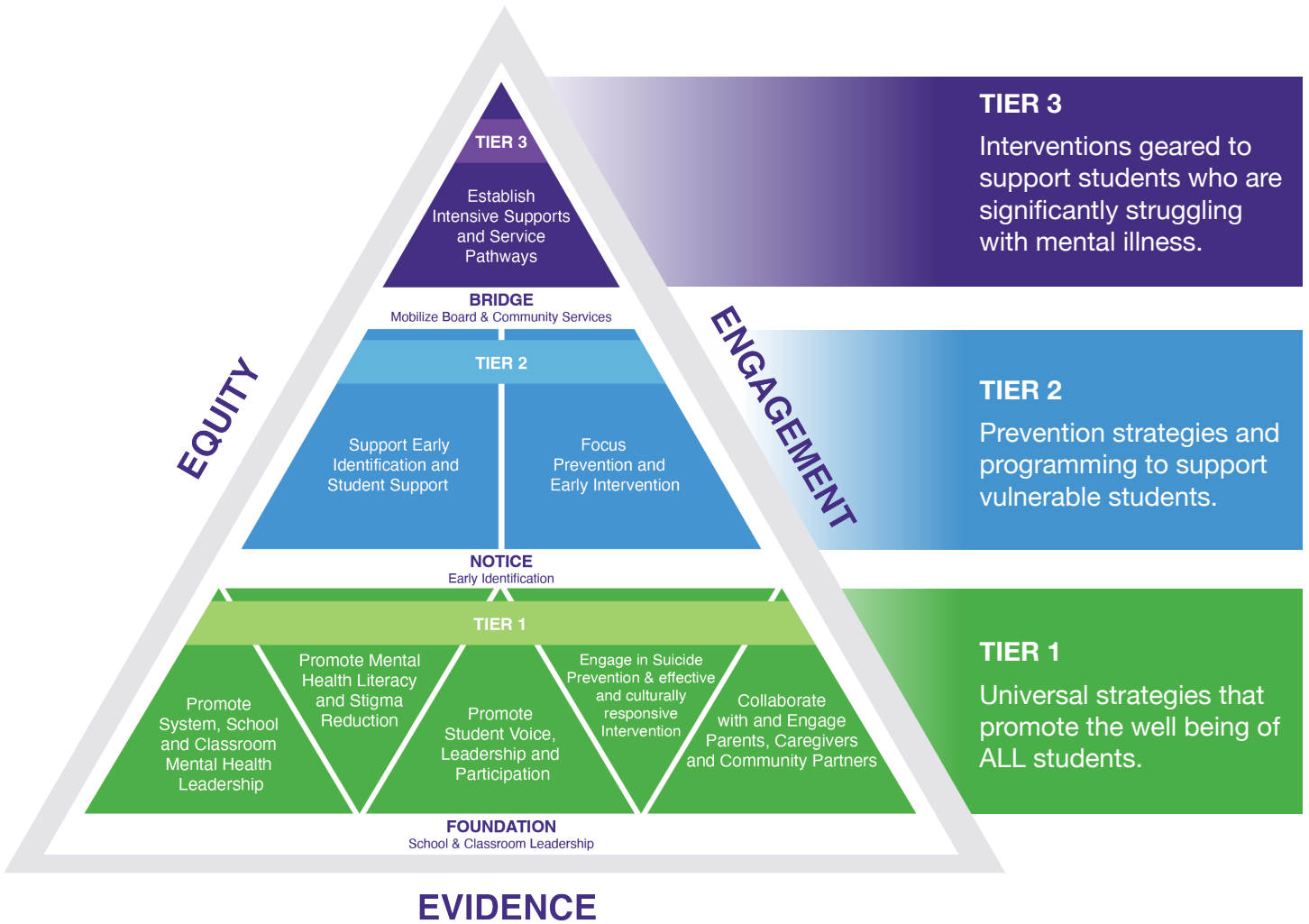
Expected outcomes of the 3 year strategy:

Every student will have access to differentiated and responsive, evidence-informed mental health promotion, prevention and intervention services at school.

How Do We Think About Mental Health?

Focusing on mental illness, rather than mental health, can leave everyone feeling overwhelmed. When you think in tiers, you can effectively design and monitor mental health services at the system and school level. It's less overwhelming when we consider our role in the broader system of care.

Schools are uniquely positioned for mental health promotion, early identification, prevention, and early intervention services. We all have a supportive role to play in crisis management and can provide accommodations and classroom strategies for students struggling with a mental illness, and we work together with our community and health partners to provide intensive mental health services.



TIER 1

Universal strategies that promote the well being of ALL students.



Promote System, School and Classroom Mental Health Leadership

How we will achieve this:

- Include a mental health goal in the YCDSB Multi Year Strategic Plan (MYSP)
- Ensure that all schools will have a mental health goal for the school year
- Continue creating and implementing in person (as possible) professional development for new administrators, new teachers and specific professional development for educators in specific roles
- Develop and implement trauma informed and healing centered professional development
- Consult with the MH advisory committee (meetings 2-3 times per year)
- The MH leadership team will ensure alignment to [PPM 169](#)
- Explore creating a mental health policy for students and staff
- Update, implement and share an updated trauma informed crisis response protocol
- Promote incorporation of a wellness corner/wall in all classrooms

Promote Mental Health Literacy and Stigma Reduction

How we will achieve this:

- MYSP goal of one faith and wellness activity per week in all schools/classrooms
- Implement Mentally Healthy and Inclusive Classrooms
- Educator mental health ambassadors in all schools and student mental health ambassadors in all high schools and expand this to have Student Wellness Champions in elementary schools
- Support roll out of mandatory mental health lessons in gr 7-8
- Support continued implementation of student MH Lit lessons in gr 9 religion and expand to inservice other teachers
- Student MH Lit lessons incorporated into Kickstart program
- Create and offer a Professional Learning Series (together with HREA, Indigenous and religion teams)
- Support consistent use of the School Mental Health Ontario (SMHO) decision support tool and share list of community partners who can provide mental health promotion/literacy and stigma reduction webinars/workshops to educators and implement the use of decision support tool
- Increase uptake of MH Lit course for educators
- Roll out MH Lit for system and school leaders

Promote Student Voice, Leadership and Participation

How we will achieve this:

- Regular meetings and communication with the Student Mental Health Ambassadors in each high school
- Develop and maintain Mental Wellness champions to be implemented in elementary schools
- Continued collaboration with The York Secondary Catholic Presidents' Council (YSCPC)
- Student mental health retreats/symposiums
- Review of data collected from students - climate and exit surveys and census data
- Work specifically with racialized and/or marginalized students to better understand and meet their needs

Engage in Suicide Prevention & Effective and Culturally Responsive Intervention

How we will achieve this:

- Continue to share and inform educators of the suicide protocol
- Collaborate with community partners in providing crisis support
- Sit on community tables focused on crisis support and intervention
- Engage in professional development in the area of self harm and establish a protocol to meet students needs
- Continue mandatory Applied Suicide Intervention Skills training (ASIST) for guidance counselors and chaplains and safeTaLK to all administrators
- Roll out SMHO suicide prevention and intervention training to ALL staff

Collaborate with and Engage Parents, Caregivers and Community Partners

How we will achieve this:

- Continued collaboration with York Catholic Parent Involvement Committee (YCPIC) and provide informational sessions to Catholic School Councils (CSC)
- Board wide parent webinars throughout the year
- Newsletters and social media as a way to stay informed
- Regular updating of community resource list - posted on website and on social media
- Regular sharing of community offerings



TIER 2

Prevention strategies and programming to support vulnerable students.



Support Early Identification and Student Support

How we will achieve this:

- Provide School Refusal training to attendance counselors
- Support black graduation coaches, guidance counselors, chaplains, English Language Learner (ELL) teachers, special education teachers, librarians, attendance counselors in identifying students in need through professional development and role specific resources
- Professional learning in ways to identify and support racialized and marginalized students

Focus Prevention and Early Intervention

How we will achieve this:

- Roll out of group intervention- Trails to Wellness, Supporting Transition Resilience of Newcomer Groups (STRONG)
- Continued individual support using Brief Intervention for School Clinicians (BRISC), Cognitive Behaviour Therapy (CBT), Interpersonal Psychotherapy (IPT), Brief Digital Interventions (BDI) or other appropriate evidence based intervention
- Roll out self identification referral pathway for secondary students
- Continued implementation of Student MH Lit in gr 9 religion- expand to offer to other teachers
- Implement MH literacy lessons in gr 7-8
- Collaborate with community partners to refer students with specific needs

TIER 3

Interventions geared to support students who are significantly struggling with mental illness.



Establish Intensive Supports and Service Pathways

How we will achieve this:

- Collaborate with community partners to refer students with specific needs
- Collaborate with providers of day treatment to ensure smooth transitions to and from treatment
- Explore ways to improve the pathway back to school for students receiving home instruction for mental health reasons
- Introduce and rollout telehealth referrals and telepsychiatry for students in need
- Develop community pathways for adult services