

GUIDE FOR

NEWCOMER

IMMIGRANT

PARENTS

School-Based Mental
Health Supports for
Your Child



**North York
Community
House**

Schools can help support your child's mental health. Our guide hopes to make it simple for you to understand how to work with your child's school, so you can get them the help they need.

Teachers and school staff are trained to create a safe and happy place for your child, and they know how to notice when a student might need extra help. When we all work together, we can help your child feel better.



1

What kind of services or resources are available at the school to support my child's mental health?

Your child can get help with their feelings and worries at school. There are teachers, guidance counsellors, and other staff who can provide support. They can also help your child get extra time for tests or talk to a counsellor right in the school. The school can make a plan to help your child.



Remember:

Your school staff are not mental health experts, but they can help.

Your child's teachers are not doctors, but they are important in helping students. They can connect your child to the right people who can help with their mental health.



2

Who can I contact if I have concerns about my child's mental health at school? And how can they help?

Teachers:

- Teachers are responsible for creating a safe and supportive classroom environment.
- They can identify early signs of mental health challenges in students and provide academic support.

Guidance Counsellors:

- Guidance counsellors offer academic and emotional support.
- They help students with academic and personal challenges, including mental health concerns.

Social Workers:

- Social workers can provide counseling, resources, and support for students facing social and emotional difficulties.
- They can help students and families access external services and navigate social challenges.

School Psychologists:

- School psychologists assess and provide interventions for students with behavioral or emotional difficulties.
- They may conduct evaluations and work with the school support team.





Therapists/Counsellors:

- Therapists or counsellors provide one-on-one or group counseling to students.
- They address a wide range of emotional and mental health issues.

Settlement Workers In Schools (SWIS):

- Settlement workers support newcomer and immigrant students in their transition to a new culture and educational system.
- They provide information, resources, and assistance to make the settlement process smoother.

Special Education Specialists:

- Special education specialists work with students who have unique needs, including those with disabilities.
- They design individualized education plans (IEPs) and offer specialized support.

School Nurses:

- School nurses can offer basic health assessments and referrals to appropriate healthcare professionals.
- They may provide guidance on physical and mental well-being.





3

How can I ensure that my child's teacher is aware of any important information about my child's mental health needs?

If you're worried about your child's mental health, reach out to their classroom teacher or another school staff member you have a relationship with.

You can request a meeting with school staff to discuss how to support your child.

- Be specific about your concerns, sharing information such as situations that may impact your child's mental health, approaches that have helped your child, and specific behaviors you've noticed.
- Ask the teacher about what they've noticed at school. Sometimes children behave differently at home than at school.

4

How can I stay informed and involved in my child's mental health journey at school?

- Ask about keeping in touch with the teacher. You can write notes, have meetings, or send emails.
- Attend parent-teacher meetings to talk about your child's progress.





5

What should I do if I need help with translation?

- Call the school and leave a message with your name and phone number, and ask for someone who speaks your language to call you back.
- Ask if the school can provide an interpreter.
- Talk to your SWIS worker about getting help with communication.
- Get a friend or family member to help you communicate with the school.

6

Who can help outside of the school if my child needs it?

In addition to the services provided within the school, parents can access a range of external supports to help their children with mental health concerns. These external resources can provide additional assistance, information, and guidance. Here are some of the external supports available:

Community and Peer Support Groups:

- Community support groups bring parents together to share experiences, advice, and emotional support.
- Peer support groups can provide a sense of belonging and understanding as parents navigate their children's mental health challenges.

Local Community and Nonprofit Organizations:

- Organizations like North York Community House (NYCH) offer various programs and services to support newcomers and immigrants.
- These organizations can provide resources, workshops, and networking opportunities to help parents and children.



Virtual Support Groups:

- Online communities and support groups on platforms like Facebook or other social media platforms can connect parents with others facing similar challenges.
- These groups often share information, resources, and personal experiences related to children's mental health.



Professional Supports:

Consulting healthcare professionals is essential for a comprehensive approach to children's mental health.

- **Doctors:** General practitioners can offer guidance and referrals to specialists when needed.
- **Psychiatrists:** Psychiatrists specialize in diagnosing and treating mental health disorders and can prescribe medications if necessary.
- **Psychotherapists:** Psychotherapists provide talk therapy and counseling services to address various mental health issues.
- **Psychologists:** Psychologists offer assessments, therapy, and interventions to support children's emotional well-being.

Parenting Workshops and Seminars:

- Many organizations and mental health professionals offer workshops and seminars focused on parenting skills and strategies.
- These programs can help parents better understand and support their children's mental health needs.

Mental Health Hotlines and Crisis Helplines:

- Hotlines and crisis helplines provide immediate assistance for parents and children experiencing a mental health crisis.
- They offer guidance, resources, and referrals to appropriate services.

Support Services for Specific Conditions:

- For children with specific mental health conditions, such as autism, ADHD, or eating disorders, there are specialized support organizations that offer guidance and resources tailored to these conditions.

Resources for your child:

Kids Help Phone -This organization offers free over the phone and online counselling for youth under 20. They can also provide information about other services to help youth with their problems.

Newcomer's Guides to Education - These guides explain what parents can expect from the Ontario education system and how you can help your child succeed both socially as well as academically.
(settlement.org.ontario/education/)

NewYouth.ca - A website with information for young newcomers in Ontario. Find information about school, work, health, law and more.

Services Near Me - This Settlement.Org service allows you to find community services in your area.
<https://services.settlement.org/en/>



Remember:

Your active involvement in your child's mental health journey is essential. Working together with the school can ensure your child receives the support they need to thrive.

This resource was created by the Mental Health and Wellness team and designed by Vincent Pascua, Volunteer Graphic Designer at North York Community House.



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