



## Student Mental Health and Addictions Newsletter

June 2022

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*YRDSB Mental Health services are provided by YRDSB psychology and social work personnel*

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### **Navigating Uncharted Territory**

For many students June symbolizes the end of the year celebration as well as the ending of a chapter. It's a time of year where a student may celebrate prom, graduations, final performances or look forward to further studies. These experiences serve as a milestone for many young people. As the school year comes to an end, it might feel like navigating uncharted territory. As we continue to navigate the unknown it is understandable for students to feel anxious, excited, a sense of loss, grief and all the emotions one can harbour during this time.

In an [article](#) by Erinne Magee, a freelance writer, discusses the importance of reflection and closure near the end of the school year. Marnee cites Jamie M Howard a PhD a senior clinical psychologist and Dana Dorfman a PhD and psychotherapist who both provide key considerations when approaching this theme of last day of school:

1. Considering cues from children such as their body language, words, behaviours or mentioning feeling fine at the moment but might be struggling as school ends.
2. Validating their feelings. Avoid overgeneralizing what the young person is feeling as this can cause feelings to be minimized. Rather, tuning in and holding space for safe spaces can allow for more open conversations.
3. Creating a family schedule. For younger children, asking your child what they miss the most can facilitate dialogue to incorporate what they were missing into

your family routine. Such as a family scavenger hunt, nature walk, photography, making a recipe and so on.

4. Reflection. Validating their progress and personal development is acknowledged. Discussing some of their favorite memories this year. Such as creating a family yearbook, photo collages, scrapbooks, storytelling or whichever creative ways suits your family.

[Scholastic Parents Staff](#) by [Scholastic Canada](#) offers some key insights in an article titled "[Tips to Get Kids Ready for the School Year End](#)" for parents on how to prepare our children for the end of the school year:

- **Talk it over:** Having open dialogue and inviting your children to reflect about their school year and their mental wellbeing.
- **Creating a countdown:** Some children might ask how long they have until an event happens? This is because they are starting to grasp the concept of time. So if your child asks "How many days until the end of school?" You can reply "Let's count down"

### **Helpful Tips and Resources:**

School Mental Health Ontario (SMHO) offers strategies on how we can start [these conversations and tools we can access to support](#).

[No Problem Too Big or Small:](#) This is a resource made by students for students. Throughout the resource, there are positive affirmations and reminders for students that there is help around and no problem is #TooBigOrTooSmall to reach out and ask for help. Check out: [My Circle of Support Pocketbook-Student Help Seeking Resource](#) by School Mental Health Ontario.

### **Additional Resources:**

[YRDSB Mental Health Resource Page](#)

[SMHO Parent/Family Page](#)

### **Upcoming Workshops:**

[Children and Restorative Sleep](#), June 6, 2022 6:30 PM EDT

For more additional workshops visit [York Hills Centre for Children, Youth and Families website](#).

We look forward to creating pathways for caring connections and meaningful relationships with parents, caregivers, and families. Share your voice by using this [feedback form](#), and let's pave the path forward together.

### **Mental Health COVID-19 Page**

As we focus on keeping ourselves healthy and containing the spread of COVID-19, we must also keep ourselves mentally well. The link below is dedicated to supporting student mental health during this Pandemic. Resources for students, parents/guardians as well as community resources are listed. In addition, there are various links to YRDSB mental health support as well as community support. Please consider taking some time to familiarize yourself with the supports found on the [COVID-19 Mental Health Supports for Students and Families](#) webpage.

Continue to check out the [YRDSB website](#) for updated information as well as the Twitter account [@MH\\_YRDSB](#).

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