

Supporting your Child's Mental Health and Wellbeing

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Parent Conference 2022
Reconnect & Renew

Overview and facilitator introductions

In today's Parenting Workshop we will discuss:

- What is children's mental health and when to be concerned
- How to access the school support team
- Strategies to add to your parenting toolkit and how to talk to your kids about their mental health
- Share local resources.

Land Acknowledgement

We acknowledge that this presentation is taking place on the unceded and unsurrendered Territory of the Anishinaabe and Algonquin Nation. We thank the Anishinaabe and Algonquin Nation for hosting us and recognize their enduring presence on this land.

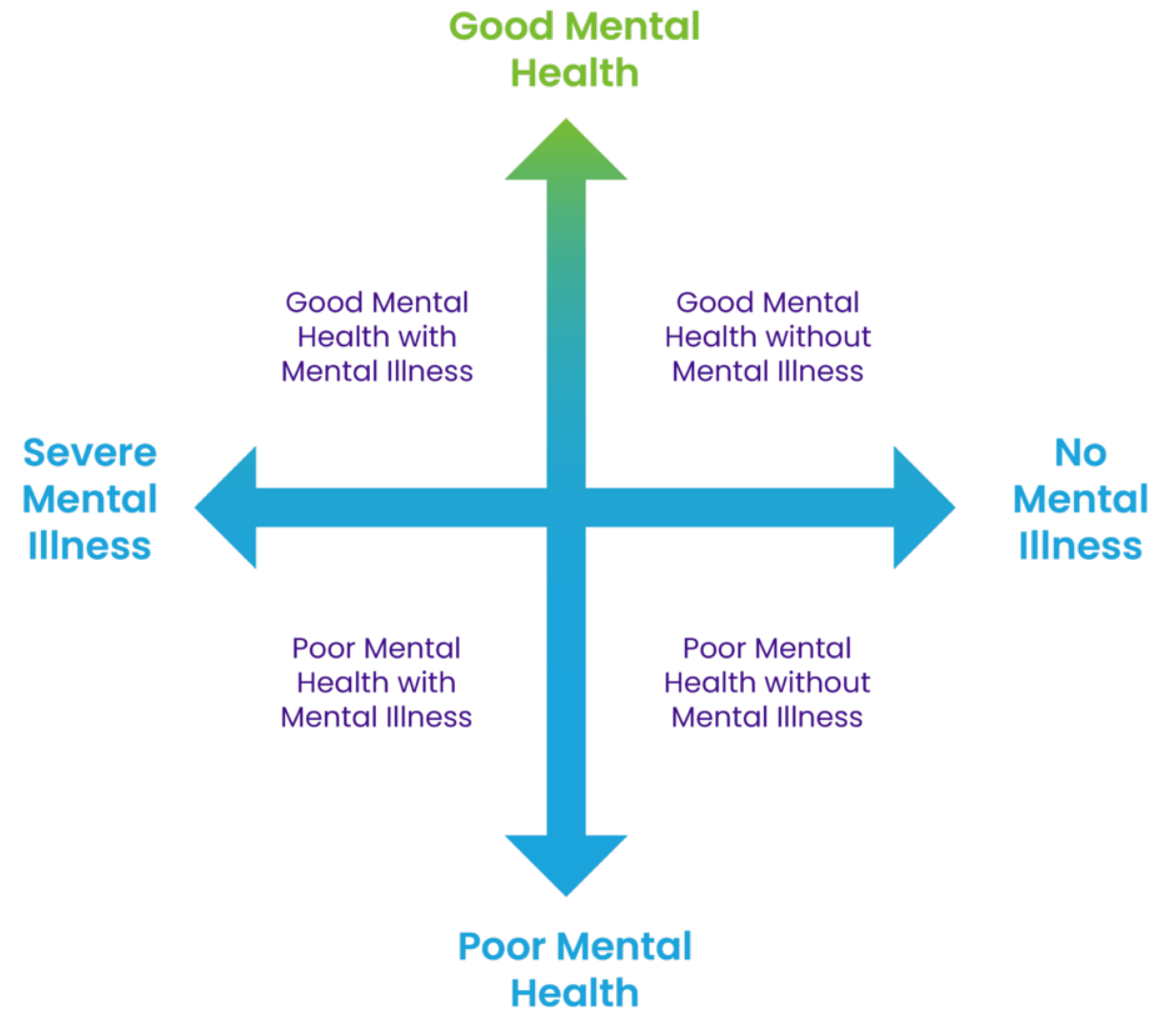




What is mental health?

A state of well-being in which every individual realizes their potential, can cope with normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully and is able to make a contribution to their community (WHO).

The Dual Continuum of Mental Health and Mental Illness



Stress & Uncertainty



Why Schools?



- Achievement and well being are linked
- Mental health promotion, prevention and intervention.
- Social emotional learning and early intervention.
- School staff can facilitate access to care

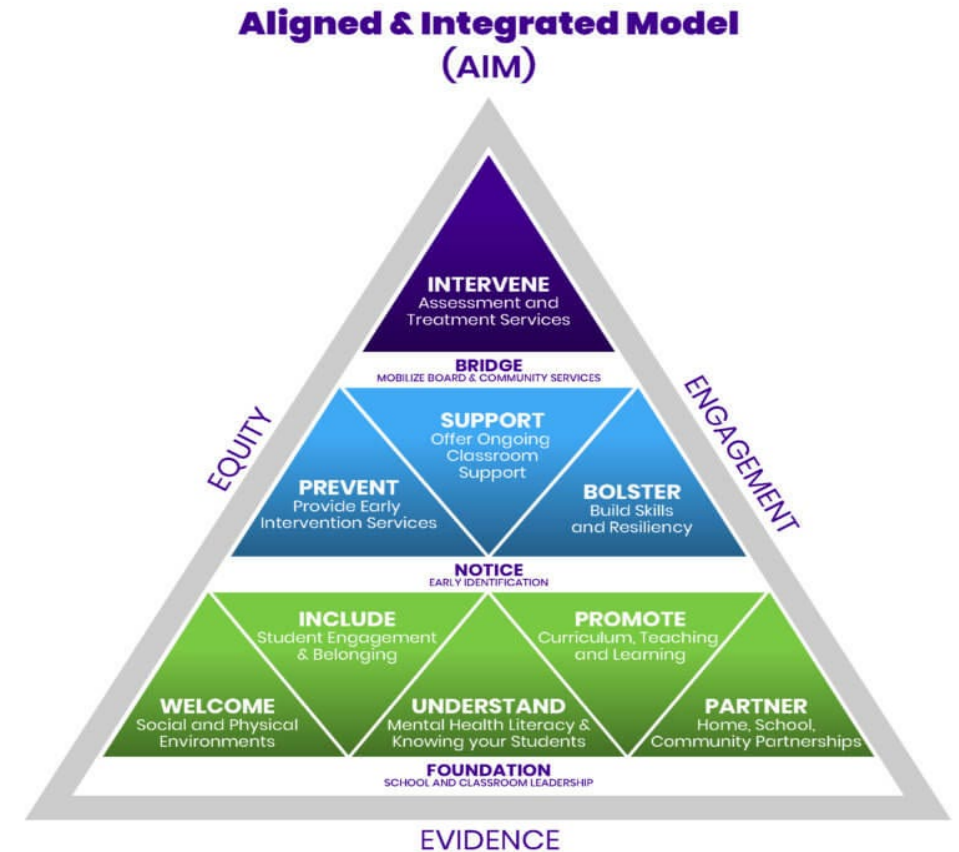
What do ALL students need at school?

- Connection to caring adults
- A place to belong and feel included
- A chance to learn
- Someone who notices and reaches out when something is wrong
- Someone who listens to them, believes them and acts on the information provided
- Someone who instills hope



The role of the school in wellness support

- Mental health promotion at school
- Early identification of mental health concerns
- Early intervention services and ongoing support



School
Mental Health
Ontario

Santé mentale
en milieu scolaire
Ontario

How to work with your child's school

- Start with your child's classroom educators; be specific about your concerns.
- Ask the educator what they've noticed at school.
- You can request a meeting with other school staff as needed.
- Discuss options for ongoing communication.

Noticing changes in your child's mental health & well-being

Think about your relationship **WITH** your child....

- W** When did the concern start?
- I** How **Intense** is the concern for my child?
- T** What is the **Timing** and how often does it happen?
- H** **How** is the concern impacting my child in their daily life?

Early identification to know if your child/youth is experiencing a mental health problem

Ask yourself:

- **Are these behaviours and emotions out of character for my child?**
- **Are they having a negative impact on my child's ability to enjoy everyday life?**
- **Are they having a negative impact on our family life?**
- **Are they getting in the way of my child's progress at school?**
- **Are these concerning behaviours happening more often?**
- **Are they more intense?**
- **Are they lasting longer?**

How to talk to your child about their mental health



Tips to help you talk to your child about mental health:

- Find a **quiet** time when you are unlikely to have interruptions to begin the conversation.
- **Reassure** your child that they can tell you anything and you will not get angry with them (even if you get scared).
- Start the conversation by **describing changes** you have noticed in their mood, behaviour, reactions
- If your child tells you anything that makes you worried about their **immediate safety** such as thoughts of suicide, reach out for assistance. Do not leave your child alone if you feel that they are in imminent danger of harming themselves.

How can I help when my child is struggling with mental health?

- Try to take pressure off them where you can (reduce some expectations).
- Inspire hope -even if it feels hard for you.
- Spend 10-15 minutes of one on one quality time with your child each day (at least).
- Engage in identity-affirming activities that bring joy (art/sports/games/colouring)

How to *ready yourself* to talk with your child/youth.

- **Prepare yourself** for a calm discussion
- You may feel anxious or worried **about what you have noticed** with your child
- Ground yourself, take time to **care for your own wellness.**
- **Think about** what you will say and possible setbacks/reactions
- Be open to tell them *‘we will get through this together’*
- Even if you don't know the answers, **being open to hearing** them is key

Building Capacity

- modelling
- co-regulation
- empathy



Emotion-Coaching Basics For Caregivers

A brief snapshot

Dr. Adele Lafrance, 2019

Emotion Coaching

In the moment:

- Increase cooperation
- Avoidance of escalation
- De-escalation
- Regulation

Over time:

- Internalization of self-regulation capacities



How does it work?



FLIP YOUR LID
Dr. Dan Siegel

EC - Brief: Validate & Support

Step 1- Validate.

Convey understanding of their emotional experience & prove that “you get it”

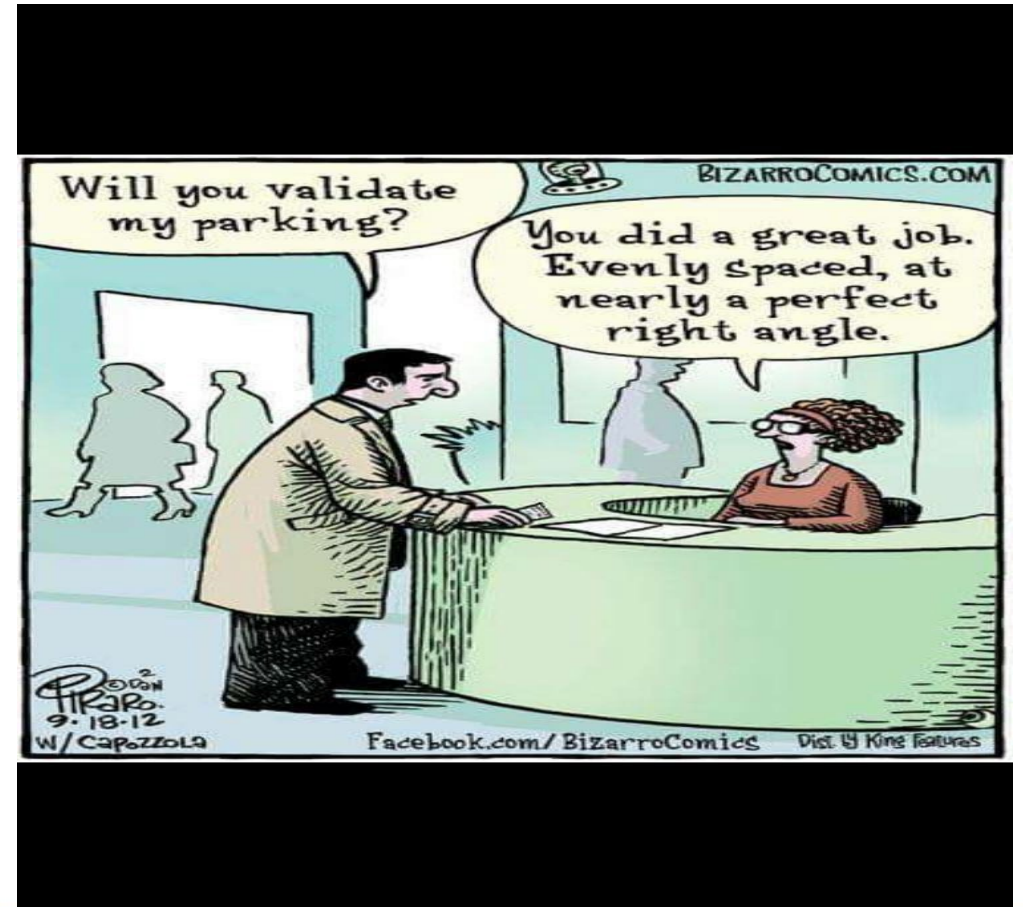
Step 2 – Support.

- A. Provide emotional support
- B. Provide practical support

Pre-teaching: Bust Myths & Establish shared definition

validation – what it's not!

- Reassurance
- Problem-solving
- What's your typical go-to?

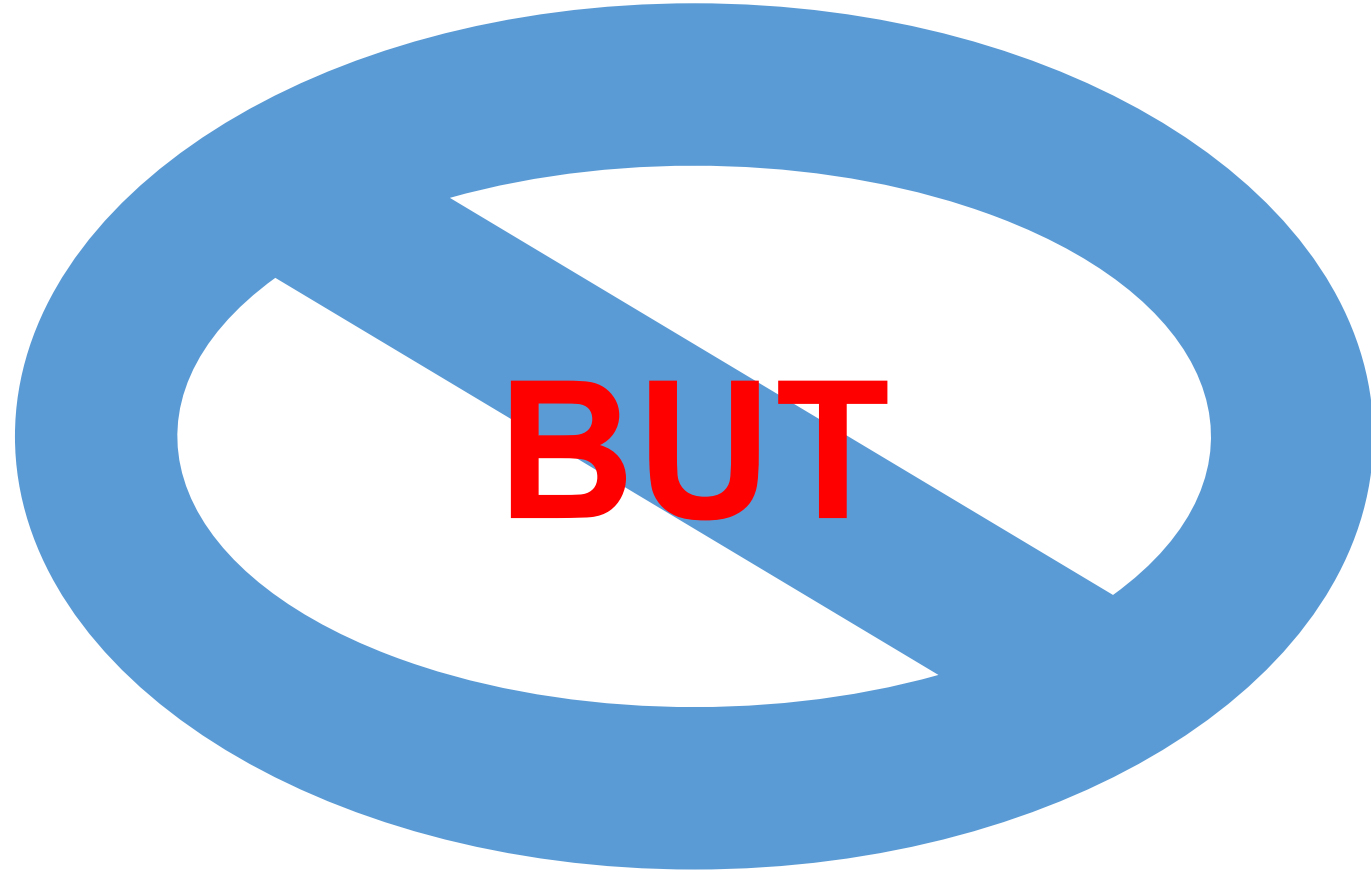


Pre-teaching – It's not...

I can understand why you might feel/think/want _____,

PAUSE!

Which 3-letter word,
are you now tempted to utter?



Core Skill: Moving From BUT to BECAUSE...

“I can understand why you might feel/think/want (_____) but...”

is transformed into:

“I can understand that you might feel/think/want (_____) because...” x 3

When the external environment mirrors the internal experience, the alarm bells in the brain reduce in intensity

EC - Brief: Validate & Support

Step 1- Validate.

A. Convey understanding of their experience & prove that you “get it”.

Step 2 – Support.

A. Emotional support

B. Practical support

Step 2: Support

Emotional Support

- Comfort
- Reassurance
- Togetherness
- Hope

Practical Support

- Distraction
- Redirection
- Exposure
- Problem-solving
- Setting limits
- Taking over

First - feel the difference: I don't want to...

Make your body into a resistant state & feel the difference

A = typical approach vs ...

B = emotion-focused approach

Step 1- Validate.

I can understand why you _____ because _____ because
_____ because _____

Step 2 – Support.

A. Emotional support (comfort, reassurance, togetherness, hope)

B. Practical support (distraction, redirection, exposure, problem-solving, setting limits, taking over)

Your self care plan

Find time to recharge

Go back to the basics

Ensure you have a support network

Tell people what you need

Model self acceptance

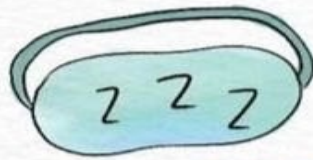


Find moments for fun and laughter

When did I last **CELEBRATE** myself?



Am I **WELL RESTED**?



When was the last time I **WASHED** myself?



What **RECURRING THOUGHTS** am I having today?



Have I been **KIND** to myself?



What can I do to make myself **SMILE** today?



MENTAL HEALTH CHECK-IN

@COLORMEHAPPY

How am I feeling?



Am I **THIRSTY**?



Do I need to **TALK** about my **FEELINGS**?



When was the last time I **ATE SOMETHING**?



How long have I spent on my **PHONE TODAY**?



When was the last time I went **OUTSIDE**?



Community Support and when to reach out for additional support

- 1 call 1 click
- Access Mental health
- YSB crisis line
- School Mental Health Ontario
- Children's Mental Health Ontario
- Resources on the OCDSB parenting portal Website

After you have had a conversation with your child or youth and are still concerned, you may want to reach out for extra support. There are 24 hr crisis lines as well as accessing your family doctor. In an emergency, local hospital or call 911.

