

# A system wide approach to reducing stigma and promoting inclusivity: Greater Essex County's story

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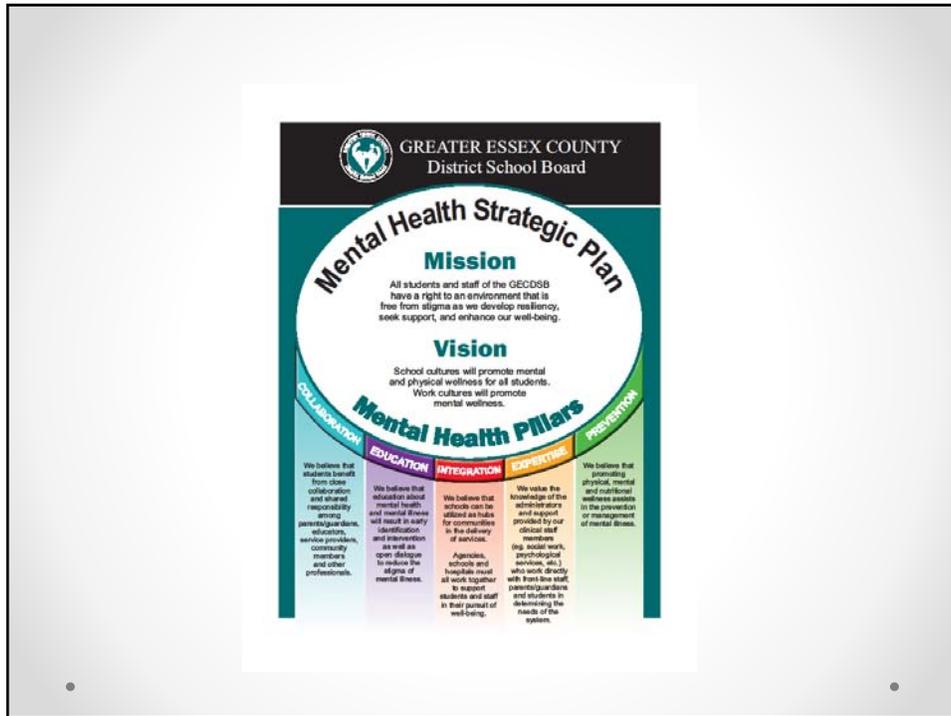
Canadian Educators Conference on Mental Health  
 Ottawa, Ontario April 23-24, 2015

**GECDSB**  
**Mental Health & Well-Being Steering Committee**

\* Superintendent / MH Lead      \* Supervisor of Psychology  
 \* Supervisor of Social Work      \* JEAP Representative  
 \* Elementary Administrator      \* Secondary Administrator  
 \* Program Representative      \* Student Success Representative

- Strategic Plan
- Mission, Goals, Vision
- Mental Health Coach

School (Admin Focus Group)	Advocate Committee	Community Outreach Professional Development	Community Partners Systems Planning	Curriculum and Teacher Support	Mental Health Minute	System
- What gaps at school level? - Protocol - Administrators - Helping staff - Capitalize on Mental Health Advocates	- PD for Advocates at school/work site level - How to Distribute?	- GECPIC - Student senate - Community Workshops	- Addictions Nurses - RCC/Marxvale/Hotel Dieu - Crisis - Student Senate	- Gr. 7/8 Mental Health - Gr. 11 Mental Health - S&T - ASIST Suicide Training	- Themed Messages - Student voice - Crisis response DVD	- Fit week - Health clinics - Physical activity - Support groups - "Happiness" Group - Administrators



### School Survey (Admin. Focus Group)

*Is there a stated priority at your school or site to support mental wellness for staff?*

- Yes 25
- No 26

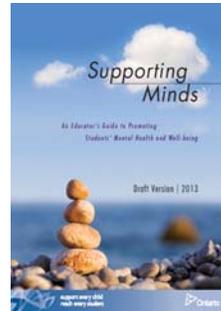
*Is there a stated priority at your school or site to support mental wellness for students?*

- Yes 32
- No 15

### School Survey (Admin. Focus Group)

Are you familiar with the document *Supporting Minds: An Educator's Guide to Promoting Students' Mental Health and Well-Being?*

- Yes 100%
- No



### School Survey (Admin. Focus Group)

Has your school integrated Mental Health into the curriculum in any subject area?

- Yes 40
- No 10

If Yes, How so?

- Cope program
- Phys ed: health (most)
- Social justice
- Bana
- Social sciences
- Foods classes
- School wide Zumba
- Family wellness activities
- Public health nurses
- Health @ each grade level
- Language arts

## Mental Health Advocates

- Brainstorm with union presidents
- Recruitment of mental health advocates
- Development of mission statement
- Professional development opportunities

### Is your child or teen often sad or dejected? Learn strategies for coping with and reducing depression!

Valuable information and guidance for concerned and caring parents, guardians, family members, and education staff. Everyone is welcome. No registration required and there is no cost to attend.

- Reduce the stigma of mental health issues.
- Recognize the signs and symptoms.
- Let's help our children and teens!

#### **Mental Health Seminar Series**

*Our third presentation will focus on*

#### **Depression**

**with Dr. Cory Saunders, C. Psych.  
Windsor Regional Children's Centre**

Wednesday March 6 - 7:00 PM  
at the Giovanni Caboto Club, Windsor

Thursday March 21 - 7:00 PM  
at the Roma Club, Leamington

Student Voice - Question & Answer Time - Community Resources/Contacts  
Refreshments - Snacks - Door Prizes  
Fill out one ballot at each seminar for a chance to win an iPad Mini in June

The following topics will be covered over the next three months.

**Suicide** - April 17 (Caledon) & 24 (Issaquah)  
**Crisis Response** - May 1 (Caledon) & 15 (Rama)  
**Self-medication** - June 15 (Caledon) & 17 (Issaquah)  
County locations for April and June will be coming out soon.

Our seminar series are supported with the funding from the GEGPC Parent Reaching Out Grant.

For more information see the Greater Essex County District School Board Web Site at [publicboard.ca](http://publicboard.ca) or call Trish Del Papa 519-252-3200 Ext. 40923



## Community Partners

### Addiction Nurses



## Crisis Response within the GECDSB

Two dedicated social workers respond to:

- Suicide threat, suicidal ideation or behaviours
- Self-harming behaviours



## The Beaker Program

A Classroom Initiative to Promote  
Development of Self-regulation Skills

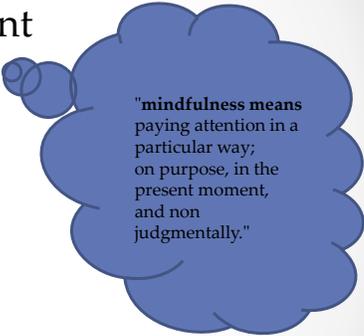
*Goal:* To help students learn to improve self-regulation through education.

*Basic Principle:* Everyone has a "beaker" that fills and can overflow resulting in emotional/behavioural dysregulation.



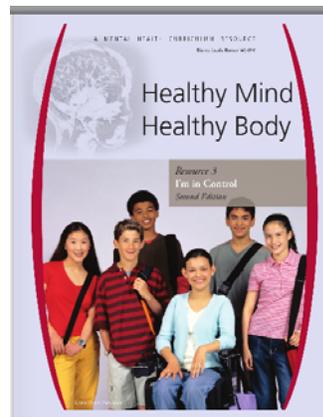
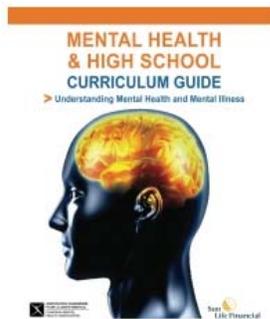
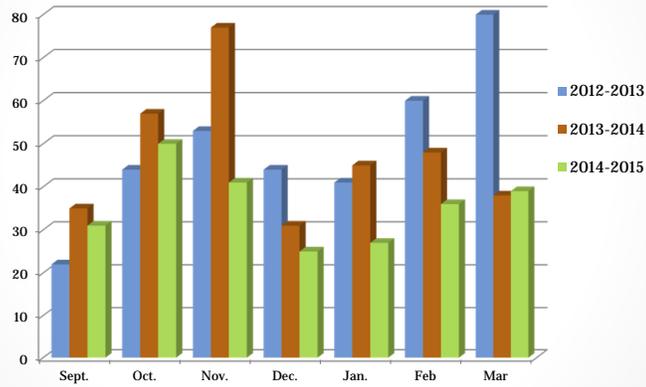
## Mindfulness movement

- Research
- Steering committee
- Focus
- Board plan
  - training
  - personal practice
  - curriculum



"mindfulness means paying attention in a particular way; on purpose, in the present moment, and non judgmentally."

### Total Crises 2012-13 vs 2013-14 vs 2014-15



## Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training (ASIST)

- "This is the best workshop I have had in 25 years"
- "Even after working for years with similar situations, I learned so much!"
- "There were times that the training was very difficult, but it was worth feeling uncomfortable because in the end I know I feel better prepared to deal with someone in crisis – at risk of suicide"

## Libro Credit Union - Grant

safeTALK for Students

This project is to develop a pilot and template specific to the "training, supporting and positioning of youth in our community", the "real experts" in mental health issues across their peer groups, to

- educate specific peers about the risks factors of suicide ideation or behaviour within their peer groups, linking these youth with the established process for intervention, and
- as prevention, developing "youth friendly" (and accepted) tools & strategies to promote positive mental health and well-being and to remove the stigma of mental illness and make it safe to seek help.



Mental Health Minute  
...take care of yourself, take care of each other

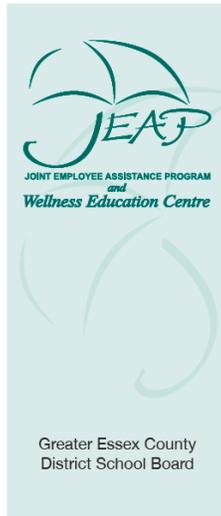
Mental Health Week: May 4-10, 2014

- Depression often goes unseen, unrecognized, and undiagnosed. A person with concealed depression is someone who is conditioned to deal with their inner demons in a way that doesn't make them clearly visible. They may or may not be diagnosed, and this may or may not be something they've shared with even their closest of companions.
- Read more at:  
<http://www.huffingtonpost.com/lexi-herrick/11-habits-of-people-with-b-6384062.html>



*Remember...our children and teens matter.*

The purpose of the mental health minute is to enhance knowledge, awareness and change attitudes towards mental health.  
... it only takes a minute.



## Unexpected Outcomes

- Refocus on behaviour, safety plans and Individual Education Plans as it relates to mental health issues.
- Need for new type of accommodation plan
- Social justice forum topics

## Unexpected Outcomes Suspension Data Analysis

Open-ended question posed to our school leaders:

*“What factors do you believe contribute to the Board's decrease in suspension rates?”*

**Elementary Administration**, Top 3 Responses:

- 23% - Anti Bullying Prevention, particularly My Daughter Vera, Training on our Safe School initiatives and policies ie., ASIST, safeTALK
- 15% - Ongoing focus on mental health education and student well being
- 15% - Alternatives to suspensions – Support vs Suspend mentality

## Unexpected Outcomes Suspension Data Analysis

Open-ended question posed to our school leaders:

*“What factors do you believe contribute to the Board’s decrease in suspension rates?”*

**Secondary Administration**, Top 3 Responses:

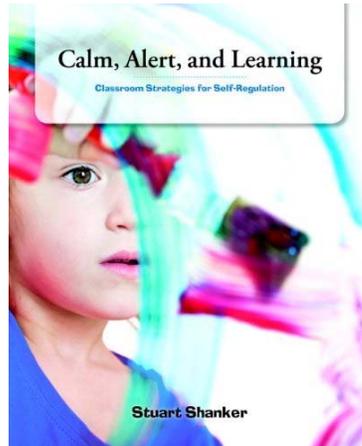
- 25% - Student Success and Professional Development – S4T, Quad SI, etc.
- 20% - Support and awareness of mental health issues
- 20% - Alternative learning – SAL, ILC, PASS, Dual Credit, etc.

## Unexpected Outcomes Greater interest in new initiatives/ideas regarding Mental Health



## Unexpected Outcomes

Book studies – Initiatives from Front-Line Staff



Mindfulness

## Unexpected Outcomes

Open discussion and disclosure – personal issues  
(child/self/spouse)



## Unexpected Outcomes

### School as a Hub



## What can School Boards do?

We have to acknowledge that students with mental health problems or illness tend to suffer academically ...

We need to recognize that fact.  
We need to plan for action.

## What are some strategies?

- Take steps to be informed about mental illness.
- Be supportive and understanding.
- Encourage practices that support wellness and a balanced life.
- Encourage peer support and friendships.

We do not diagnose.  
We do not enable.  
We support.

Take Care of Yourself  
Take Care of Each Other  
Take Care of Our System