



Making Them Whole:
New Students, Mental Health and Belonging

Dr. Daniel To

Who am I?

- Full participating life partner to Michelle
- Father to Madeline Reine & Spencer Morgan
- District Principal, Education Services, Specialty Programs
- Instructor, Master of Arts, Trinity Western University, Global Program
- Bachelors and Masters of Education (Curriculum), University of British Columbia
- Doctor of Education (Leadership), Simon Fraser University
- Member of the Centre for Leading Research in Education at Laurier University

www.drdanielto.com



Mental Health is “the capacity of each and all of us to feel, think, and act in ways that enhance our ability to enjoy life and deal with the challenges we face. It is a positive sense of emotional and spiritual well-being that respects the importance of culture, equity, social justice, interconnections and personal dignity.”

Public Health Agency of Canada

Mental Health is “the capacity of each and all of us to feel, think, and act in ways that enhance our ability to enjoy life and deal with the challenges we face. It is a positive sense of emotional and spiritual well-being that respects the importance of culture, equity, social justice, interconnections and personal dignity.”

Public Health Agency of Canada

Mental Health is “the capacity of each and all of us to feel, think, and act in ways that enhance our ability to enjoy life and deal with the challenges we face. It is a positive sense of emotional and spiritual well-being that respects the importance of culture, equity, social justice, interconnections and personal dignity.”

Public Health Agency of Canada

Why are they here



SURREY CITY HALL



TRACK AND FIELD MEET



CANADA DAY CELEBRATIONS



Photo credit: City of Surrey



Let's get
Real(istic)

What we
sometimes forget



Alone

What we sometimes forget

Even with

- A great home
- A welcoming school district
- A supportive school
- A fantastic agent/custodian
- Kids New to Canada will still sometimes feel

What we
sometimes forget



Alone

Centre for Addiction and Mental Health

- Of Canadians ages 15+ who report having a mental health care need in the past year, one third state their needs were not fully met.
- An estimated 75% of children with mental health disorders do not access specialized treatment services
- 39% of employees indicate that they would not tell their managers
- 57% of Canadians believe the stigma associated with mental illness has been reduced compared to five years ago
- The economic burden of mental illness is about \$51 billion dollars per year in health care costs, lost productivity, and reductions in health-related quality of life
- Unemployment rates are as high as 70% to 90% for people with the most severe mental illness
- In any given week at least 500,000 employed Canadians are unable to work due to mental health problems
- The cost of a disability leave for mental illness is about double that of a leave due to physical illness.

Centre for Addiction and Mental Health

- In any given year 1:5 Canadians experience mental illness or addiction problem
- By the time Canadians reach 40 1:2 have had a mental illness
- 70% of mental health problems have their onset during childhood or adolescence
- 34% of high-school students indicate a moderate to serious level of psychological distress. 14% report serious levels (symptoms of anxiety and depression)
- Young people aged 15-24 are most likely to experience mental illness and substance use disorders
- Men have higher rates of addiction than women, while women have higher rates of mood and anxiety disorders.
- People with mental illness are twice as likely to have a substance use disorder. At least 20% of people with mental illness have a co-occurring substance use disorder
- People with schizophrenia have as high as 50% co-occurring substance use disorder
- People in the lowest income group are 3-4 times as likely to report poor mental health
- 23-67% of homeless individuals report having a mental illness in Canada.
- Mental Illness is the leading cause of disability in Canada
- Mental Illness can cut 10-20 years from life expectancy
- About 4,000 Canadians die per year by suicide..almost 11 per day.

More Stats

- Ages 14-17 is when anxiety hits the most in people
- Often mental health issues go unnoticed – come out as physical symptoms, and doctor gives good bill of health when finds no physical issues
- We socialize our kids (and therefore inadvertently some of our international kids to “suck it up” because it’s just a teenage “phase”.

Dr. Ian Manion

- Immigrants have a higher percentage of health and mental health problems after being in Canada over a 7 year period
- Part of the reason for this is that immigrants don’t understand our medical system.
- Kids separated from at least 1 parent for more than a year, 300% increased chance of developing psychosis.
- If kid is moved into foster care – more than 300% chance of developing psychosis

Dr. Kwame McKenzie, Wellesley Institute

We need to Help parents Understand this Loneliness

- Lower Self Esteem
- Depression
- Unhealthy social connections
- Unhealthy eating habits
- Mood changes
- Anxiety



Mental Health Challenges

Some Symptoms Parents can look for

Potential Behaviours and Physical/Physiological Indicators

When an employee is showing possible indicators of a mental health problem, Mental Health First Aid can help them return to their usual performance quickly. Without the support of effective intervention, the problem could worsen or a crisis could emerge.

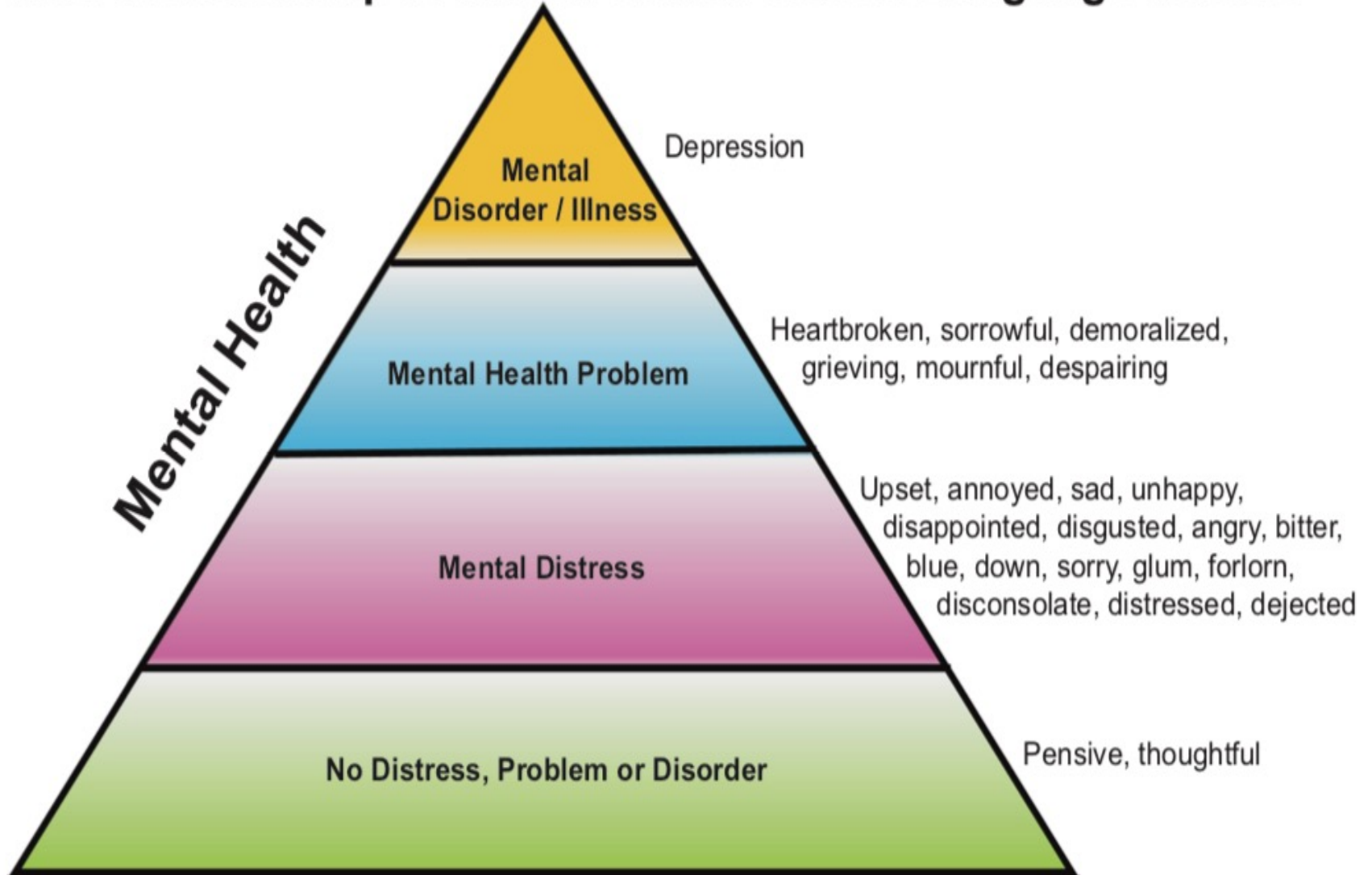
Possible behaviours:

- Not getting things done
- Erratic behaviour
- Emotional responses
- Complaints about a lack of management support
- Fixation with fair treatment issues
- Complaints of not coping with workload
- Appearing withdrawn
- Reduced participation in work activities
- Increased consumption of caffeine, alcohol, cigarettes, sedatives, etc.
- Being indecisive
- Inability to concentrate
- Increased errors or accidents
- Loss of confidence
- Unplanned absences
- Conflict with team members or manager
- Use of grievance procedures
- Difficulty with memory

Possible Physical/Physiological Indicators

- Tired all the time
- Sick and run down
- Headaches
- Persistent or resistant musculoskeletal complaints
- Reduced reaction times
- Difficulty sleeping
- Weight loss or gain
- Disheveled appearance
- Gastro-intestinal disorders

The Inter-Relationship of Mental Health States: Language Matters



Dr. Stan Kutcher

Dr. Stan Kutcher @ teenmentalhealth.org



And there's also

Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs)

WHAT ARE ACEs?

ACEs are stressful events during childhood and include:



ACEs can affect us all

IMPACTS OF ACEs

Greater risk of poor physical, mental and emotional health throughout the life-course, including:



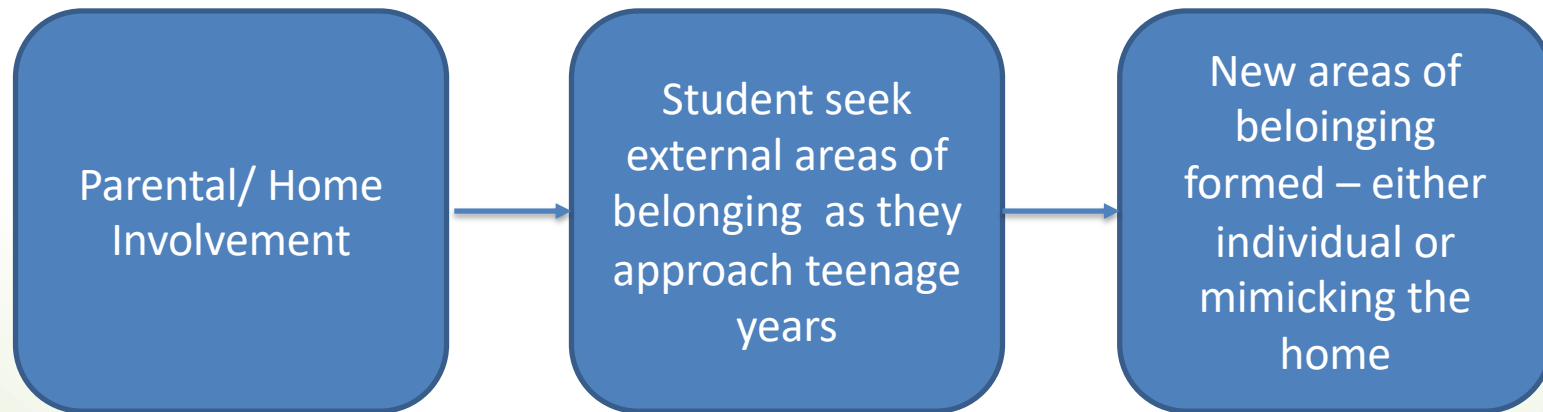
ACEs have a cumulative effect - the more childhood adversity experienced, the greater the risk of harmful effects later in life



However, harm is not inevitable and with the right support, people can overcome adversity



Transferring and Creating Sense of Belonging (Membership)

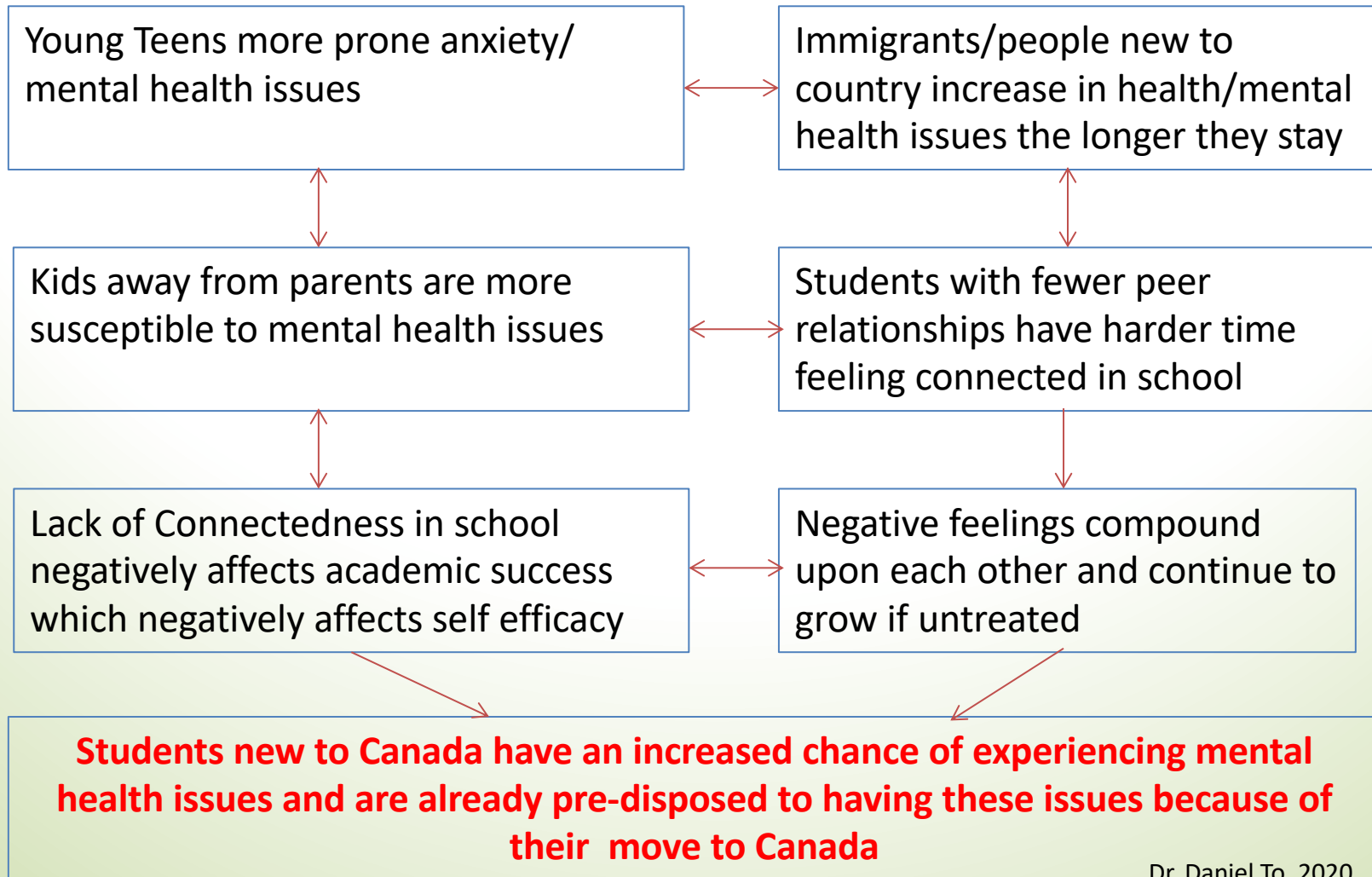


So how does this affect kids in school???

- Students who have very few peer relationships have a decreased chance of experiencing a feeling of connectedness affecting their self-efficacy and academic success
- At the age when many students come over, they are also at the crucial age where they are trying to belong (pre-teenage years)
- Academic success is affected negatively when students do not feel a sense of membership within a school system.
- Engagement in school and social activities within a school is limited if students do not feel a sense of membership.
- Lack of Academic success and engagement and, an overall lack of feeling of membership leads to lower self-efficacy (self esteem)

Dr. Daniel To, 2017

Let's Connect The Dots



The Solution?

Don't Change your
Practice

**Change your
Perspective!**



We try and “talk” kids out of it...but....does it create Stigma – Would you EVER see posters like this?

HEART DISEASE. JUST ANOTHER EXCUSE FOR LAZY PEOPLE NOT TO WORK.

IMAGINE IF WE TREATED EVERYONE LIKE WE TREAT THE MENTALLY ILL.

Shocking, isn't it? But it's true. People simply don't take mental illnesses seriously. They assume that those with mental illness are weak or somehow at fault for their suffering. But like heart disease or any other serious affliction, people with mental illness can't get better by themselves. The Canadian Psychiatric Research Foundation raises money to research mental illnesses in the hope of finding cures. Still, research into these diseases, which strike 1 in 5 Canadians, remains drastically underfunded. And that's as unsettling as the headline. We need your help. If you can, please give. Call 1-800-915-CPRF or visit www.cprf.ca



MENTAL ILLNESS IS REAL. HELP US FIND A CURE.

A LOT OF PEOPLE GET CANCER BECAUSE THEY JUST CAN'T DEAL WITH REALITY.

IMAGINE IF WE TREATED EVERYONE LIKE WE TREAT THE MENTALLY ILL.

Shocking, isn't it? But it's true. People simply don't take mental illnesses seriously. They assume that those with mental illness are weak or somehow at fault for their suffering. But like cancer or any other serious affliction, people with mental illness can't get better by themselves. The Canadian Psychiatric Research Foundation raises money to research mental illnesses in the hope of finding cures. Still, research into these diseases, which strike 1 in 5 Canadians, remains drastically underfunded. And that's as unsettling as the headline. We need your help. If you can, please give. Call 1-800-915-CPRF or visit www.cprf.ca



MENTAL ILLNESS IS REAL. HELP US FIND A CURE.

Alas...

*Without a feeling of belonging (membership),
the engagement in any
sort of learning is temporary, as the social
constructs that surround membership, which
is crucially important to student success, would
be lacking.*

The Key is for Parents and Schools is...



The Key is for Parents

You are not alone – School Schools
and Fraser Health Authority

PARENT/CAREGIVER GUIDE

Surrey Schools Mental Health Videos



Surrey Schools has created a series of videos to support you in discussing these important mental health and wellness topics with your children.

All of the videos are available in English, French, Punjabi, Arabic and Mandarin, and all have closed captioning.

The topics/themes covered in these videos include:

- You are Not Alone
- Coping with Stress and Anxiety
- Navigating Life Changes
- Digital Stress
- Healthy vs Unhealthy Stress
- Health and Wellness
- Healthy Relationships
- Body Image

The videos are intended to engage you and your family in a variety of mental health topics. They are not meant to identify specific problems. If you are seeking specific information, please speak to the counselling team or administrator in your school.

Reach out if you need support

The topics for these videos were identified by our school-based counsellors as subjects that are relevant to students, and cover issues that are important for childhood development. We also know some challenges can be overwhelming for students and families – we encourage you to consult a health professional or your school counsellor if you need any additional support.



After you have viewed the videos, you may want to engage your child/children in a discussion about them. For example, you may ask them:

- What are some things you learned from the video?
- How did the video make you feel?
- What are some questions you have after watching the video?
- In addition to us (as your parents/caregiver), who else could you talk to about these topics?
- What are some good suggestions that you liked in the video that you may want to try and practice?
- After watching the video, what is important for me to know or pay attention to?

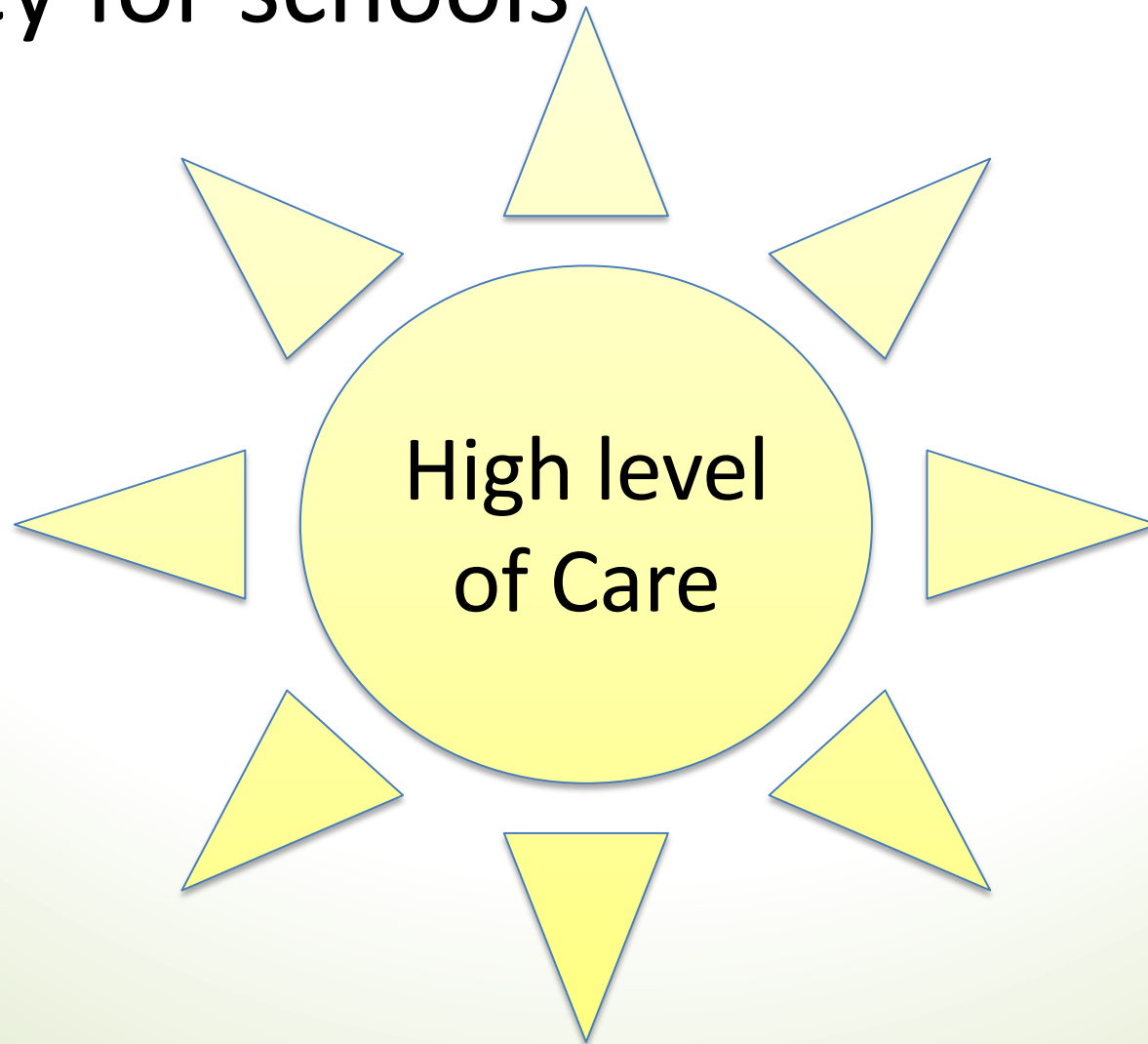
Some community resources that may also be helpful include:

1. **START: 1-844-START1**
2. **Kid's Help Phone: 1-800-668-6868**
3. **Fraser Health Crisis Line: 604-951-8855 or 1-877-820-7444 (toll-free)**
4. **Crisis Line for Indigenous Elders, Adults and Youth: 1-800-588-8717**
5. **Youth in BC**
6. **Child & Youth Mental Health**

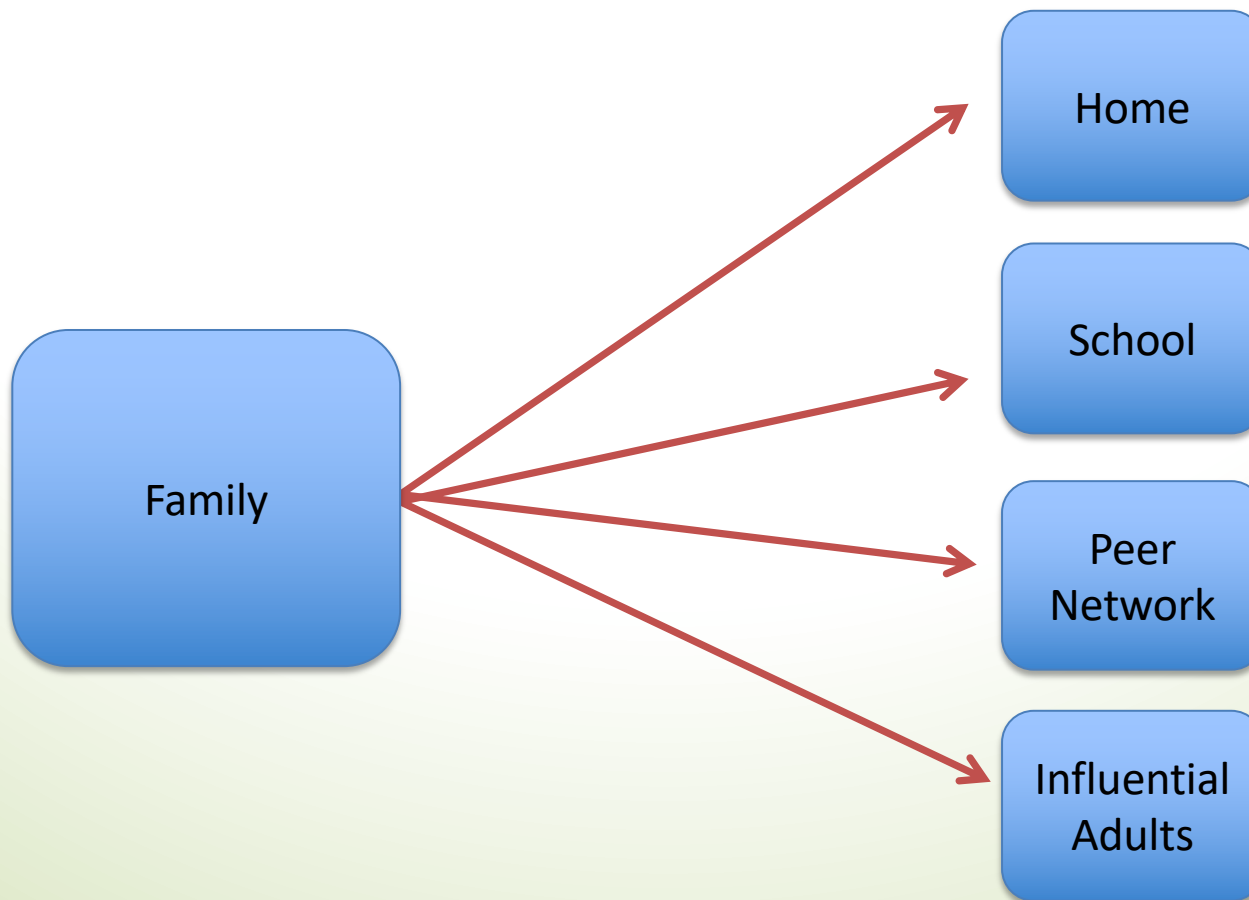
Scan this QR code to view the videos & access additional resources



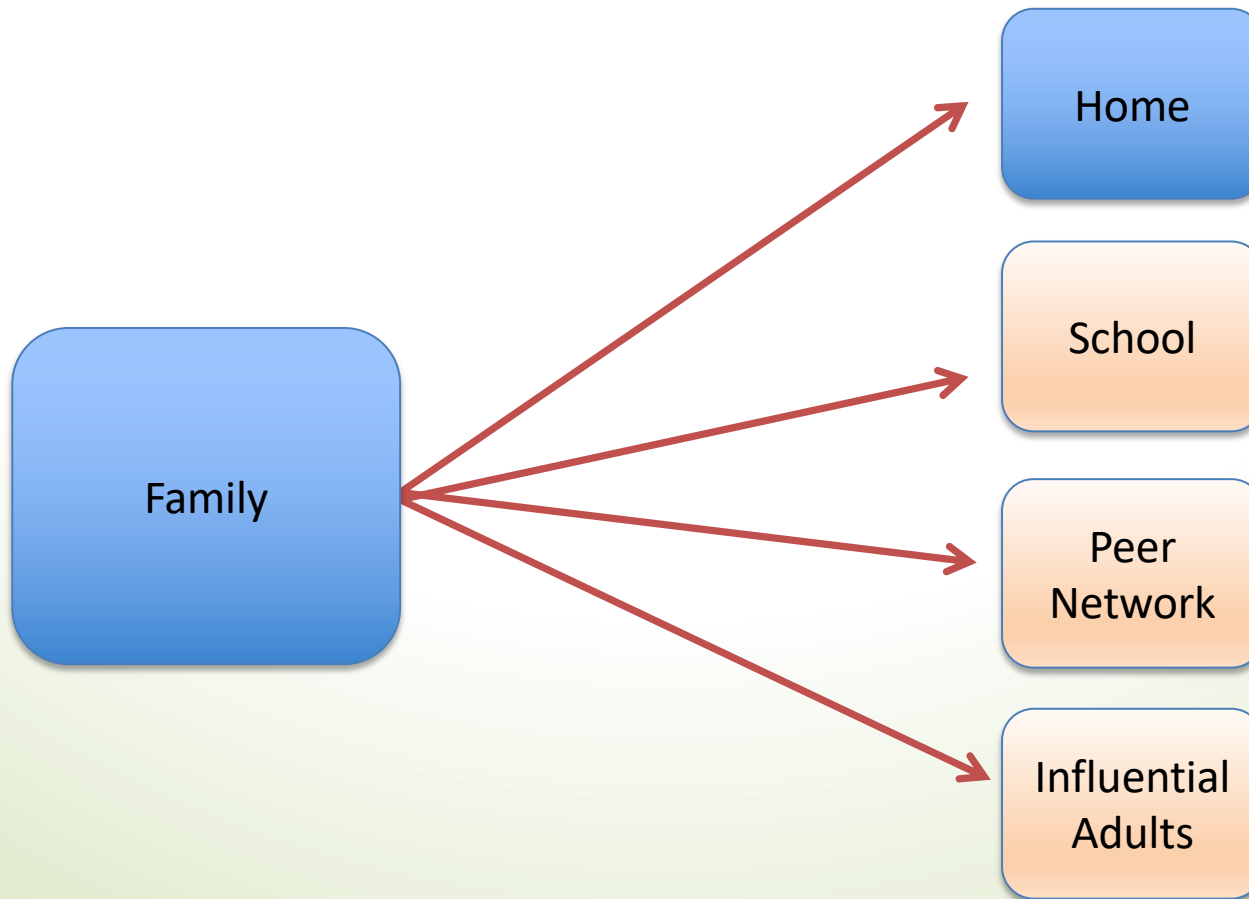
The Key for schools

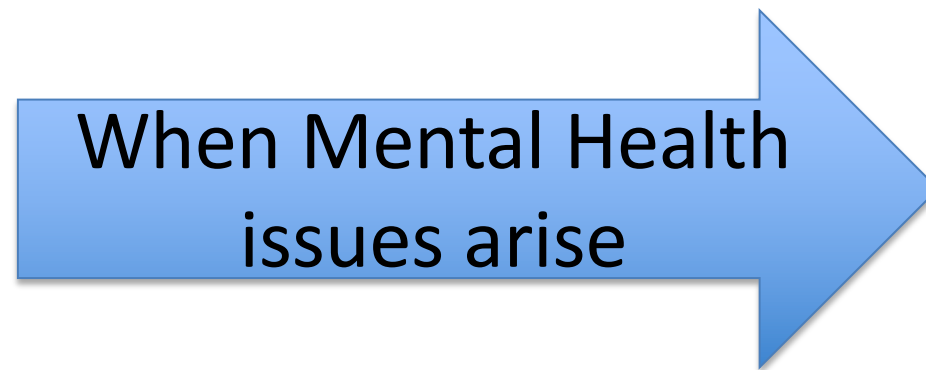


Transference of Belonging (Membership)



Transference of Membership





When Mental Health
issues arise



Mental Health
Commission
of Canada

Commission de
la santé mentale
du Canada

**Mental Health
First Aid Canada**



A

**Assess for risk of suicide or
harm**

L

**Listen
nonjudgmentally**

G

**Give reassurance and
information**

E

**Encourage appropriate
professional help**

E

**Encourage self-help and
other support strategies**

Transferring and Creating Sense of Membership

1. Help students connect to the community.
2. Schools build relationships with the families of new immigrants/ new families to increase the level of trust
3. The School needs to set up purposeful peer groups/ membership opportunities for International Students

Summary and Conclusion

1. New Students and New Families, by virtue of their very nature – are **more prone** to mental health issues: in particular anxiety and psychosis
2. We need to be **intentional and thoughtful** in how we work with students new to Canada in order to give them a chance at increased self-efficacy and academic success.
3. People working with students new to Canada can take **purposeful steps** to lessen mental health issues in this population through setting up and maintaining specific relationships with them.
4. We need to **empower them** to seek out opportunities to seek out avenues for creating and increasing their sense of membership in their new community.
5. When you encounter students new to Canada with mental health issues, give them a **high level of care**.

Mental health video series

- Important health and wellness topics were identified by district counsellors & school psychologists as common challenges faced by children and teens.
- Eight animated videos were created:
 - You Are Not Alone
 - Coping with Stress & Anxiety
 - Navigating Life Changes
 - Digital Stress
 - Healthy vs Unhealthy Stress
 - Health and Wellness
 - Healthy Relationships
 - Body Image



<https://surreyschools.ca/mentalhealth>

Contact

Dr. Daniel To, District Principal
Education Services | Specialty Programs
Surrey Schools

to_d@surreyschools.ca

drdanielto@shaw.ca

@DanielToSD36

778.772.4992

Additional Resources

- <https://www.surreyschools.ca/mentalhealth/>
- <https://www.eaie.org/blog/5-mental-health-stressors-international-students.html>
- <https://blog.ingleinternational.com/mental-health-what-it-means-for-international-students-and-how-you-can-help/>
- <http://ontario.cmha.ca/news/promoting-mental-health-awareness-and-support-for-international-students/>
- <https://keltymentalhealth.ca>
- <https://www.mentalhealthcommission.ca/English>
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=w-Geb1fkM58>
- <https://www.albertafamilywellness.org/resources/video/how-brains-are-built-core-story-of-brain-development>