

Student Mental Health and Well-Being



TCDSB Mental Health Services provided by **Psychology, Social Work, and Guidance** personnel

Take Time to “Breathe”

During this busy time of year you may want to consider taking the time to “breathe”. This sounds obvious but by “learning how to slow your breath, you can dial down your whole stress response” (M.Oaklander). Deep breathing is also known as diaphragmatic breathing, belly breathing, or abdominal breathing. There are many benefits of teaching students how to “deep breath”. Deep breathing will help to clean your blood by removing carbon dioxide and increases oxygen. Studies have shown that when you engage in deep breathing it can result in a happier mood because it activates areas in the brain that impact on antidepressive activities. It also helps you sleep better, and improve concentration. Research also suggests that deep breathing helps lower anxiety. By engaging in deep breathing it can help students to feel calm and gain a sense of control when faced with challenging situations. It’s also a portable tool that students can use anytime and anywhere. You can begin teaching students how to deep breath by first explaining what it

Wishing everyone a joyful Christmas!



means. Then have students sit comfortably and explain the technique:

- Take a slow deep breath in through your nose (for about 4 seconds)
- Hold your breath for 1 or 2 seconds
- Exhale slowly through your mouth (for about 4 seconds)
- Wait 2-3 seconds before taking another breath
- Repeat for at least 5 to 10 breaths

It’s important to instruct students that their belly should inflate when inhaling and their belly should deflate when exhaling. Only their belly should be moving (not their chest). They can pretend that they are blowing up a balloon in their belly.

As with any new tool, practice is important to be able to use deep breathing effectively.

(Information obtained from www.anxietybc.com; www.stressfreekids.com; www.health.harvard.edu, Time Magazine Mindfulness edition)

The spirit of God made me, And the breath of the Almighty gives me life ~ Job 33:4

Fostering The Family:

The TCDSB Pastoral Plan 2015-18 “ Together With one Voice: Harmonizing Our Faith Through Family, Parish, and School” 2016 focuses on the PARISH

As the Christmas season approaches let us take the time to focus our attention on the birth of Christ within our parish family

- Pray together as a family
- Attend mass as a family and consider participating i.e., offer to take up the gifts
- Participate in parish activities

A Prayer for Christmas Morning

The day of joy returns, Father in Heaven, and crowns another year with peace and good will. Help us rightly to remember the birth of Jesus, that we may share in the song of the angels, the gladness of the shepherds, and the worship of the wise men. Close the doors of hate and open the doors of love over the world. Let kindness come with every gift and good desires with every greeting. Deliver us from evil, by the blessing that Christ brings and teach us to be merry with clean hearts. May the Christmas morning make us happy to be thy children and the Christmas evening bring us to our bed with grateful thoughts, forgiving and forgiven, for Jesus'sake. Amen

*From: A Treasure of Christmas Stories
by Henry Van Dyke*

Wishing you a Very Merry “Mindful” Christmas

Christmas is often a very busy time of year with much planning and activities. While it's enjoyable, we may find ourselves rushing from one event to another without taking the time to enjoy each moment. We encourage you to consider the following tips so that you will enjoy a “mindful” Christmas.

- Play Christmas songs each day
- Eat mindfully – when eating your favorite holiday treat enjoy each bite by paying attention to the flavor and texture
- When waiting in a shopping line be mindful of all that you are grateful for. This may help you feel calm and help to put things into perspective
- Go for a walk in nature and pay special attention to the sights, sounds, and smells
- When decorating your Christmas tree take the time to enjoy the beauty of the moment
- Most of all take a deep breath and enjoy the magic of Christmas!

(Information obtained from www.pocketmindfulness.com)

Mental Health Initiatives 2016-2017

- Support for schools in developing a mentally healthy classroom. See Supporting Minds on the Ministry's website and edugains.ca.
- Inclusion of mental health to school SLIPs
- Building partnerships with community agencies, families, and parishes.
- safeTALK suicide awareness workshops for staff available via PAL
- Psych. And SW supporting Newcomer Mental Health



Suggested Readings and Websites:

Books:

A Boy and a Bear: The Children's Relaxation Book by Lori Lite

Breathe, Chill: A Handy Book of Games and Techniques Introducing Breathing, Meditation and Relaxation to Kids and Teens by Lisa Roberts

Deep Breathing for Kids by Zemirah Jazwierski

Websites:

www.health.harvard.edu

www.stressfreekids.com

www.anxietybc.com

Youtube videos:

Sesame Street: Common and Colbie Caillat "Belly Breathe" with Elmo

"Just Breathe" by Julie Bayer Salzman & Josh Salzman

A Laugh A Day...



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