Suggested Newsletter Inserts for Elementary Schools

Mental Health

**Stress: It’s here to stay**

Sometimes the stress we face can feel overwhelming, and our kids experience it too. Here are some tips for managing stress that the whole family can try:

* Take deep breaths: this sends a message to your brain to help calm down and relax.
* Get active: play sports, exercise or do something to get moving.
* Laugh and have fun! Laughter and physical activity actually cause physical changes in our bodies that help to relieve stress.
* Show love with words, hugs and kisses.
* Decorate a family worry box: everyone in the family can write down their worries and put them in the box. Then take time to review the notes together, talk about them and show each other support to help cope with stress in a healthy way.

For more tips visit School Mental Health Ontario (<https://smho-smso.ca/>).

To speak with a public health nurse, call *Health Connection* at 705-721-7520 or 1-877-721-7520 or visit [www.simcoemuskokahealth.org](http://www.simcoemuskokahealth.org/).

**Stress: Kids get it too!**

Kids have stress, just like us. Stress is a normal part of life, but our bodies are only made to handle it for short amounts of time. Continued stress can cause feelings of pressure, anxiety, and tiredness. It can make it hard for kids to focus in school and can cause them to become sick, get lower grades, or make unhealthy choices.

It’s easy to mistake signs of stress for bad behavior in your child. You can help them learn to manage stress by staying calm, showing love and talking openly about their feelings. Encourage them to try calming activities like deep breathing or doing something active. If the stress continues, be sure talk to your child’s family doctor or health care provider.

For more tips visit Strong Minds Strong Kids (<https://strongmindsstrongkids.org/>).

To speak with a public health nurse, contact *Health Connection* at 705-721-7520 or 1-877-721-7520 or visit [www.simcoemuskokahealth.org](http://www.simcoemuskokahealth.org/).

**Is Homework Stressing You Out?**

Throughout the year, your child may have homework or need to spend time studying at home. You can help make homework time less stressful. First, let your child relax with a healthy snack when they get home from school. Ask if they have homework, what kind, and how long they think it will take to finish. It’s a good idea to set a regular time each day and decide on a specific place to do homework. Your child might need help for a couple minutes to get started.

Remember, it’s not your job to do their homework! Ask questions to help your child learn to solve problems on their own. Show interest and provide encouragement while they are working. Focus on the things they do well to help them stay motivated and be successful. If problems persist discuss them with your child’s teacher.

Looking for more parenting support? Visit https://smho-smso.ca/ or speak with a public health nurse by calling 705-721-7520 or 1-877-721-7520 or visit [www.simcoemuskokahealth.org](http://www.simcoemuskokahealth.org/Home.aspx).

**Is Bedtime Stressing You Out?**

Kids need 10-12 hours of sleep every night but sometimes getting them to bed can be frustrating. You can help create a regular sleep schedule for your child by setting a clear bedtime and sticking to the same time every night. Start getting ready an hour before bed; turn off the TV, computers and phones. Spend quality time talking or reading stories to help them unwind. Agree on how many you’ll read before you start! Keep their room dark, cool and quiet - a nightlight is fine. Remember, making sure your child gets enough rest will help improve their mood, behaviour and ability to learn.

For more bedtime tips, contact *Health Connection* at 705-721-7520 or 1-877-721-7520 to speak with a public health nurse or visit [www.simcoemuskokahealth.org](http://www.simcoemuskokahealth.org/).

**Creating Safe and Healthy Schools**

A Healthy School supports children to reach their full health and learning potential. There are many ways for you to get involved in creating a safe and healthy school for your child. Here are some ideas:

* Talk with your child about what they are learning at school, and find ways to role-model or reinforce the health messages at home
* Stay informed about your child’s school through the school website and social media platforms.
* Get to know your child’s friends, other parents, and staff from the school and communicate often
* Volunteer to participate on a committee that helps organize healthy activities for the school community. Contact your child’s school or your local public health unit to get started.

Looking for more parenting support? Speak with a public health nurse by calling 705-721-7520 or 1-877-721-7520 or visit [www.simcoemuskokahealth.org](http://www.simcoemuskokahealth.org).

Suggested Newsletter Inserts for Secondary Schools

Mental Health

**Coping with Stress and Anxiety**

Feeling stressed and having anxiety can be common among teens. Some teens experience stress and/or become anxious or fearful about something for a day or two and are able to return to normal without any need for help from their parents. However, some teens experience more intense and frequent symptoms and feelings that prevent them from participating in normal everyday life. Creating a positive family environment, encouraging regular school attendance and helping your teen understand and discover ways to cope can help.

If you would like to learn more about understanding your teenager’s emotions and behaviours, ways to talk openly with your teenager and encouraging your teenager to practice their coping skills, call *Health Connection* at 705-721-7520 or 1-877-721-7520 and talk to a public health nurse.

Online parenting resources are also available:

School Mental Health Ontario (<https://smho-smso.ca/>)

Strong Minds Strong Kids (<https://strongmindsstrongkids.org/>)