

Psych to Thrive

Schools and families share a common goal: ensuring student success.

Psychology staff at Dufferin-Peel work together with schools and families to promote student achievement, mental health and well-being. Our new **PSYCH 5 TO THRIVE** initiative offers 5 strategies to help students thrive at school and at home.

“For surely I know the plans for you, says the Lord, plans for your welfare and not for harm, to give you a future with hope (Jeremiah 29:11)”

Talking to Teens About Stress

Stress isn't just a problem for adults. Young people often have unhealthy levels of stress. Many teens experience high, unhealthy stress levels. School is the top source of stress for teens, followed by deciding what to do after high school. Stress can lead to both emotional and physical symptoms.

The good news is that you can help your child learn to keep stress in check.



Recognize the Symptoms: Be aware of the signs that indicate unhealthy stress levels.

Irritability, anger, excessive worry, sleeping difficulties, and disordered eating (overeating or eating too little) are common signs of stress in young people. However, not everyone has the same signs of stress. Stress is individual. Try to figure out your child's signs of stress.



Communicate: Talking about stress is a good first step in overcoming it. Spend one-on-one time regularly with your teen, and use it as an opportunity to talk and to learn about stress. For example, not all stress is bad. Moderate amounts of stress help you learn the most. Also, it's not the amount of stress that's bad, it's how you view it. Positive views enhance health and performance.



Teach Healthy Coping Mechanisms: Physical activity is one of the best ways to manage stress. Biking, walking and swimming are good activities for teens who don't like team sports. Encourage your teen to get enough sleep. Limiting screen time and stimulating activities in the evening helps teens fall asleep more easily. Stress management is a skill anyone can learn!



Create a Safe Harbour: Family routines and rituals are reassuring for children and teens, and can be especially comforting during stressful times. Help your child learn relaxation and calming techniques, such as Deep Breathing, Progressive Muscle Relaxation and/or One-Minute Mindfulness.



Model Healthy Behaviours: Actions speak louder than words, and that's especially true when parenting teens. Early coping strategies become later coping strategies. Make them healthy! Do your best to eat healthy foods, engage in physical activity, get enough sleep and take steps to get your own stress under control.

Ask for help if you're concerned about your child's stress. Psychologists are experts in helping people change unhealthy behaviours and manage stress.

For further information, contact the current psychological consultant at your child's school or Dr. Debra Lean, Chief Psychologist, at (905) 890-0708, Ext. 24330.

