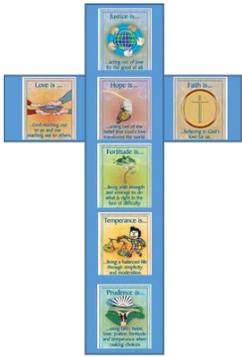


# A Strengths Based Approach



## Building Resiliency & Positive Mental Health

Educators in our Catholic schools play a vital role in supporting the mental health of students, through the lens and living of our Catholic Virtues.

The CDSBEO is committed to building resiliency and positive mental health for all of our students. The Board has identified a Continuum of Support providing Prevention, Targeted Intervention and Specialized Supports for students to develop resiliency, use restorative practices, identify student specific needs and promote school and community mental health supports.

### Building Resiliency: A Strengths Based Approach

*“The challenge is to create caring relationships and an environment that looks at promise and the hope of new possibilities. It is the attitude of hope and optimism that builds resiliency and positive mental health.” Dr. Donaleen Hawes, Superintendent of School Effectiveness*

School excellence involves positive social capacity and excellence in instruction. When these combine, students experience positive educational outcomes and relationships, which are essential to resiliency.

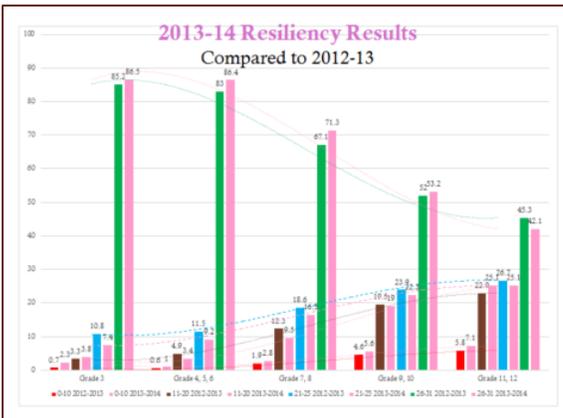


Our goal is to build the Resiliency and Positive Mental Health of our students by using a strengths-based approach to support students becoming positive, productive and responsible individuals.

Resiliency surveys are completed by all students in grade 3 to grade 12. Results are used to empower individuals and school teams to engage in and better understand the strengths and skills that are essential for navigating life’s challenges and becoming healthy adults.

School Resiliency Response Plans and Student Resiliency Action Plans are developed to utilize internal and external strengths to build student resiliency and Mental Health wellness and reduce inappropriate and bullying behaviour.

Our Board Plan is to build student resiliency using a strengths based approach with tiered intervention starting with prevention strategies for those children and youth with moderate and significant strengths. Providing targeted intervention for those vulnerable students and to access specialized support for students with an impoverished resiliency profile.



Board wide Resiliency Surveys allow schools to look at their own school results and student profiles in order to build student resiliency and positive mental health. Results indicate an increase in the number of students with significant resiliency strengths.

Our primary and junior students are extremely resilient, whereas the high school students, in particular grade 12, see themselves as more vulnerable and less resilient.

As a Board we are trying to focus on building Mental Health strengths and protective factors to change this trajectory and to help adolescents to feel empowered, and to cultivate sensitivity, acceptance and self-control, self-efficiency and planning, and decision making skills. School and student Resiliency Action Plans are developed to identify strengths as well as areas to strengthen. The Board is



## The Resiliency Framework: 31 Developmental Strengths

The Youth Resiliency Framework identifies 10 Resiliency Factors and 31 Developmental Strengths such as Learning at School (bottom green section) which encompass positive experiences with school work, school engagement and student achievement. All three work together to support healthy human development.

The external factors that build Resiliency are around the outside of the wheel. These are what the students feel they “HAVE.” For example, “I have a caring school environment. I have family support, or I have positive peer relationships.”

The internal factors are the inside ring of the framework. These are the personal traits the students feel they possess, the “I AM” factors. For example, “I am caring, I am spiritual, I am able to show restraint.”



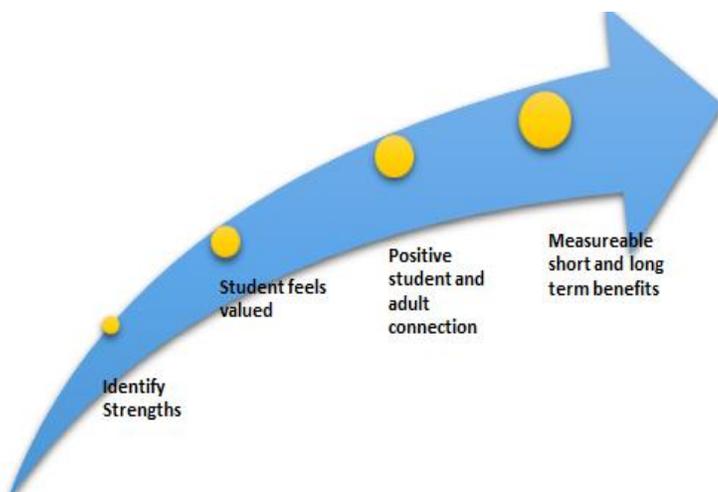
Together the “I HAVE” and the “I AM” help a child to feel “I CAN” succeed!

## Using Restorative Practices

Restorative Processes aim to establish an environment where students are empowered to solve problems through authentic conversations using Restorative Proactive Classroom Circles, Questions/Conversations and Formal Conferences, in which all stakeholders have a voice in finding a solution.

Restorative Practices do not seek to deny consequences for misbehaviour, but focus on helping students understand the real harm done by their misbehavior, to take responsibility for the behaviour and commit to positive change. A Restorative approach works with all participants to create ways to make things right and make plans for future changes.

The Restorative Practices Continuum moves from informal actions such as affective statements to the use of informal conversations and the Five Questions, to more formal classroom circles or formal conferences.



### ***Building Relationships with Proactive Circles***

*Proactive circles are rooted in the belief that, "When we make others know that they belong, (and that we care); Then we all know we belong (and are cared for.)" Jean Vanier*

It also functions on the belief that people are happier, more cooperative and more productive when people in authority do things *WITH* them, rather than *TO* them or *FOR* them.

We believe in the power students have to interact with others and solve problems in positive ways. Proactive circles also allow students to practice effective communication which is a life skill that we and our students can and must use in all relationships.

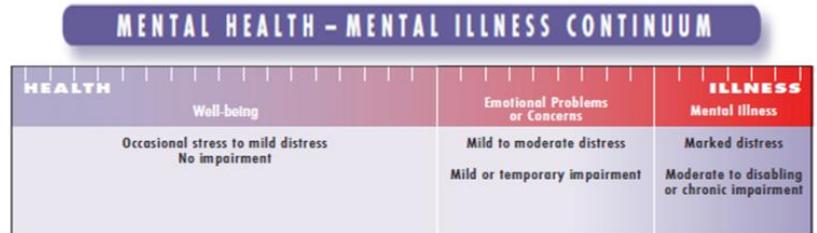
# Understanding the Mental Health Continuum

The Mental Health Continuum can help us to see how we can support children no matter where they are on the continuum. The goal is to always move individuals toward the well-being side of the continuum.

We know that all individuals occasionally experience stress and even mild distress. As distress increases a child or youth may experience temporary impairment, however marked and severe distress results in disabling or chronic impairment. Understanding the mental health continuum will help students and staff promote positive mental health.

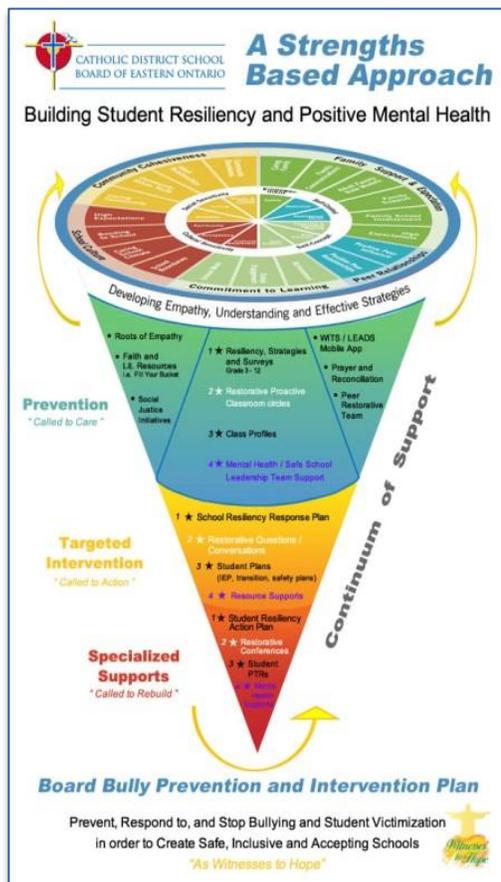
**Positive Mental Health**  
Healthy moods, resilient, able to function and reach potential

**Emotional Problems**  
Mild problems with thoughts, behaviours, stresses at school/home



**Mental Illness**  
Mood anxiety problems, Externalizing, Psychosis, substance abuse

## Continuum of Support



The Continuum of Support for Building Resiliency and Positive Mental Health also serves as the Board Bully Prevention and Intervention Plan. It is based on developing a Whole-School Faith Community that is safe, inclusive and accepting, utilizing our Gospel values and reconciliation.

A strengths-based approach is taken to building the Resiliency and Positive Mental Health of students, by developing students' empathy, understanding and using of effective strategies to prevent and respond to bullying if it occurs in ways that will stop future bullying. The plan promotes prevention by a "Call to Care", with targeted interventions by a "Call to Action" and a "Call to Rebuild" through specialized supports.

Specific prevention programs, targeted interventions and specialized supports provide a continuum of support for students. Restorative practices including proactive classroom circles, restorative questions/conversations and formal restorative conferences enable schools to create environments in which bullying behaviors are reduced and students are empowered to resolve conflicts and deal with difficult situations.

Visit [www.cdsbeo.on.ca](http://www.cdsbeo.on.ca) to view the entire Board Bully Prevention and Intervention Plan.

# 4 Central Areas of Focus in the Continuum of Support

The intensity and specificity of the support provided increases as a student moves from Prevention, to Targeted Intervention and then into Specialized Supports as required. The 4 areas of focus on the Continuum of Support are repeated in each of the 3 Tiers.

- 1. **★ Building Resiliency:** survey results are used to inform school profiles and action plans.



Survey & Strategies

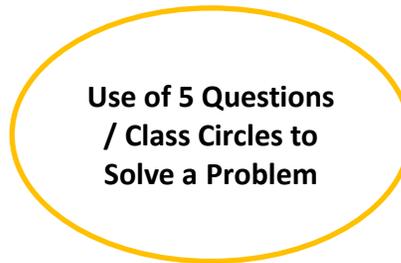
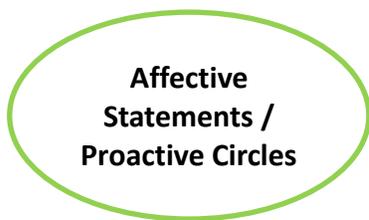


School Profiles



Student Action Plans

- 2. **★ Using Restorative Practices:** affective statements and proactive circles are used in classrooms. Formal conferences are used to repair harm and restore relationships when more serious issues occur.



- 3. **★ Identifying Specific Needs:** class profiles allow teachers to identify information that will facilitate learning. Individual Education Plans (IEP's) outline alternative, modified and accommodated programs and supports, while Prevent, Teach, Reinforce Behaviour Plans (PTR's) identify specific social, emotional and/or behavioral interventions required.

Class Profiles

IEPs

PTRs

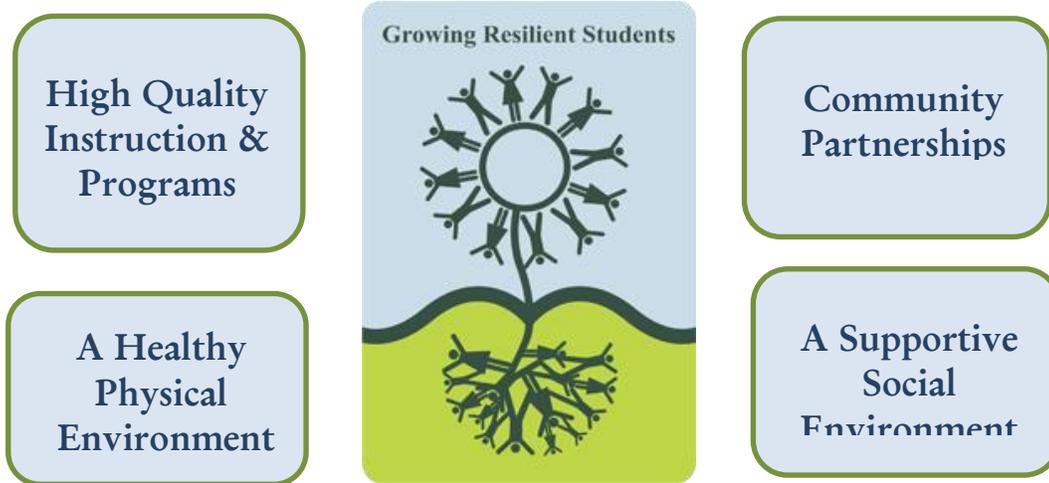
- 4. **★ Providing School, Board and Community Mental Health Supports:** the Mental Health Lead, Special Education Principal and board team, support school Mental Health Leadership Teams and agency partners to support students in need.

School Staff and Mental Health Leadership Teams

Resource Supports  
SERT, SSW, IAW

Agency Partners

# School Community Promoting Resiliency and Positive Mental Health



*"The idea is to collaboratively work to create an 'ecology' around children and youth that makes it increasingly difficult for certain high problem behaviours to survive."* Dr. W. Hammond

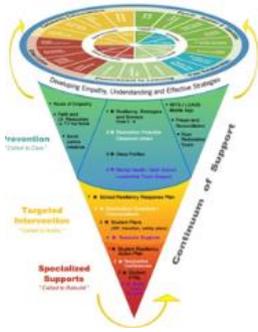
Parental involvement and support is essential in developing positive mental health for our children and youth. Catholic School Councils, the Special Education Advisory Committee and the Parent Involvement Committee reach out to parents and work to provide the voice of parents as partners in education.

To help build positive mental health and school climates that support mental health, schools are focusing on building the foundations of a strengths based school by creating caring relationships, setting high expectations, increasing student engagement and establishing clarity and understanding of boundaries. These four resiliency strengths are identified as important resiliency factors for schools, as well as communities and families to develop.



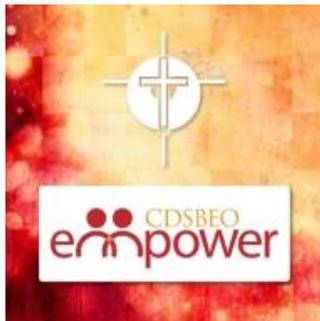
*"Our goal is to increase students' positive mental health by helping them to feel they belong, can succeed, can make meaningful contributions and feel respected and are respectful."* Paula Perrault, Principal of Special Education

# Reaching Out to Students

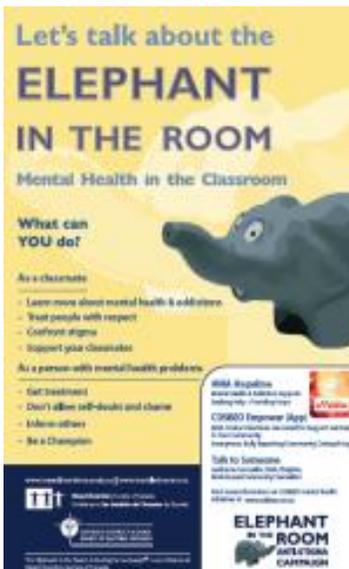


Student voice is provided when students complete the Resiliency Surveys and identify areas of strengths and where they are feeling vulnerable. The results of the survey can be shared with students to look at building on their mental health strengths and resiliency factors.

Peers also provide support to each other. For example, Peer Restorative Teams involve high school students being trained to support restorative conversations and proactive circles, which allow them to learn vital communication skills and feel ownership and contribute positively to the overall atmosphere of a school.



The Catholic District School Board of Eastern Ontario has partnered with InTouch Mobile, to develop an anti-bullying and community outreach app entitled CDSBEO EMPOWER. It gives access to *MHA Hopeline* which provides contact numbers for community supports and distress lines. This App provides students and parents an avenue to quickly, conveniently and anonymously report incidents of bullying and victimization in schools and to seek help.



ELEPHANT IN THE ROOM Anti Stigma Campaign helps students build awareness, take action and seek help.

The Elephant in the Room reminds us that we need to learn more about mental health and addiction, confront stigma and support our classmates. Students experiencing mental health problems are encouraged to get help/treatment, not allow self-doubt/self-stigma and to be a champion for developing positive mental health.

By displaying the blue elephant we show that we care about the wellness of others and that THIS is a safe place to talk about mental health problems without fear of being looked upon differently.



High School Mental Health Presentations are provided in each of the Secondary Schools (ie: Elizabeth Manley and Michael Baine). These presentations are designed to offer students a glimpse into the life, struggles and successes of someone dealing with mental illness and encourage students to Seek Help if needed.

## Working with our Mental Health and Addiction Partner Agencies

Our Partner Agencies provide a vital service to support students needing Specialized Supports and to give more children, youth, and their families the services they need, more quickly and more effectively to prevent and reduce the personal, social and economic costs of mental health and addiction problems.

Partner agencies work with staff, students and families to provide necessary interventions and supports.



- **Lanark** – Open Doors for Lanark Children and Youth



- Children's Mental Health of **Leeds and Grenville**



- Valoris for Children and Adults of **Prescott Russell**



- **Cornwall** Community Hospital, Stormont, Dundas and Glengarry



Community agencies have supported the development and implementation of joint collaborative protocols including the Community VTRA Protocol: Violent Threat Risk Assessment and the Suicide Prevention, Intervention and Risk Review Protocol, designed to help students at risk of harming themselves or others.

## Mental Health and Addiction Support Provided in Schools



### **CCAC Mental Health and Addiction Nurses**

School based support for students dealing with mental health and addiction issues is provided by CCAC Mental Health and Addiction Nurses.

### **Community Mental Health Counselors in each High School**

School teams work with agency partners to ensure students receive support from mental health counselors when required, in order to deal with mental health and addiction issues.

*"...it is crucially important for us to be aware of mental health issues amongst our students and to be able to direct or provide resources for parents and students, so that we can ensure they are getting whatever assistance they need."*

*Wm. J. Gartland, Director of Education*