

The H-N REACH EarlyON at Home

FAMILY NEWSLETTER

MENTAL HEALTH AND WELL BEING

According to the Oxford Dictionary, 'well being' is defined as the state of being comfortable, healthy and happy. That's why we will be focusing on taking care of ourselves, our families and our mental health in this issue. We are also celebrating Mental Health Week this week (May 4th to May 10th) and will share messages from the Canadian Mental Health Association, as well as a message from one of our very own clinician's here at H-N REACH, a Children's Mental Health agency.

From all of us here at the EarlyON Centres to all of you, we wish you health and happiness, and read on for more tips on how to achieve that!



SELF-REGULATION: WHAT IT IS AND WHY IT'S IMPORTANT FOR YOU AND YOUR FAMILY

It doesn't take much imagination these days to think about how stress feels. We can feel it in our bodies - in muscle tension and a faster heart rate. Sometimes, we can hear it in our voices, which might be louder and harsher. And we can see it in our responses to our children.

When we're under stress, we feel a strong need for control. But almost everything is outside of our control during this COVID-19 pandemic. So, our frustration and need for control might become directed at our children, and it could lead to hitting, yelling and punishing. Those reactions won't help us reach our long-term goals. They can damage our relationships, create fear in our children, and model hurtful behaviour.

One of the most important things we can do is learn how to manage our own stress and frustration. This is called 'self-regulation'. It involves being aware of our stress levels and the emotions we're feeling - and learning ways to calm our mind and body before acting. It takes practice, but everyone can do it.

There are many things we can do to self-regulate. They only take a few minutes, they don't cost anything, and they don't require space. If you practice them every day, they will start to become habits. You can help your children learn to do this too - this is called 'co-regulation'.

Two of the best ways to self-regulate are deep breathing and movement. You can find videos to help you practice on the PDEP website: www.positivedisplineeveryday.com. Follow this website for more information about Positive Discipline in Everyday Parenting and learn how to help create some peace in your home.

GET UP AND MOVE!

Playing games is a great way to relieve tension and draw a smile. Why not try some balloon games? Playing with balloons can help develop hand-eye coordination, and fosters cooperation, collaboration and turn taking! Try this simple game:

Keep It Up - Keep the balloon off the floor! Make it even more challenging by just using your head, elbow or foot!!

Remember: Balloon scraps are a choking hazard for little ones, so pick them up quick!



CHILDREN'S MENTAL HEALTH WEEK MAY 4TH - 10TH, 2020

The Canadian Mental Health Association's annual Mental Health Week helps us to shift beliefs and perceptions about mental health. It helps promote behaviours and attitudes that foster well-being, support good mental health and create a culture of understanding and acceptance.

Here are the messages they want to share:

"I'm Fine, Thanks"

- It's common in Canada to say we're fine, even when we don't really mean it. Every time we just go through the motions, we miss a chance to connect with others in a meaningful way.

Time to Get Real

- As we face the COVID-19 global pandemic, we need each other now more than ever. It's time to #GetReal about how we feel and lean on others for support.
- Let's say more than just "I'm fine." Let's have real conversations with our friends, neighbours and coworkers about how we're all really doing. We're in this together.
- In these days of social distancing (more accurately called *physical distancing*), we are learning that we don't have to *be* close to *feel* close. We are together, even when we're apart.
- Everyone needs emotional support at the best of times.
- It is precisely the time, during and in recovery from the pandemic, to lean on each other. Even if we can't be close physically with one another, we need to stay close emotionally.

Social Connection

- Connecting with other people and our communities doesn't just feel good, it's good for our mental health too.
- Feeling socially connected means you feel close and connected to others, and you don't have to be in physical proximity to nurture a sense of closeness and connection.

Retrieved from: Canadian Mental Health Association, www.mentalhealthweek.ca



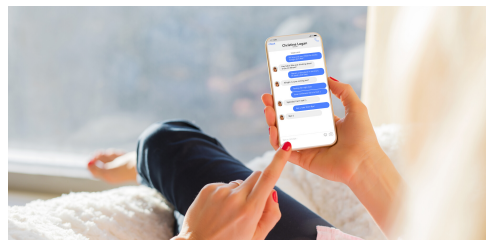
Get ready to get loud and
#GetReal



CMHA
Mental Health Week

**May 4-10,
2020**

Visit mentalhealthweek.ca for info and tools!



HOW TO STAY HEALTHY AND HAPPY DURING A PANDEMIC

As we mentioned before, the Oxford Dictionary defines 'Well Being' as the "state of being comfortable, healthy and happy." In order for us to take care of our children, we need to take care of ourselves and embrace our own well-being.

How do we do that during this pandemic? Consider this:

Stay Connected with family and friends, just like we mentioned before. Call your loved ones, facetime with a friend; reach out to your support system through email. Follow the H-N REACH EarlyON Child and Family Centre Facebook page to enjoy videos, activities and stories with your child!

Take time for yourself. The schools and programs are currently closed and you may find yourself getting stretched. You may be helping with online school, coming up with creative ways to keep everyone busy, working, maintaining your home, etc. - but remember to set aside time each day to focus on yourself and your own well being.

Sleep Well. Try to maintain your regular sleep routine. According to www.mentalhealth.org, sleep is as important to our health as eating, drinking and breathing. It allows our bodies to repair themselves and our brains to consolidate our memories and process information. Poor sleep is linked to physical issues such as a weakened immune system and mental health problems such as anxiety and depression.

Eat Well. Staying at home and fighting boredom can sometimes lead us to snacking more often and eating less nutrition meals. Try creating a weekly meal plan with the input of family members and having the kids help in the meal making process! It will keep meals on track and limit visits to the grocery store.



CREATING THE CALM DURING COVID-19

We talked about why calming down, or regulating ourselves, was important - and we talked about how to calm ourselves down and stay healthy during this quarantine. But how, during this time of change and uncertainty, can we help to 'Create the Calm' for our children and the children in our lives?

This time of change may be difficult, exciting, and scary all at the same time. Children need to figure out new ways to connect with friends and family, all while dealing with frustration, boredom and missing their "normal" lives of friends, family, school, playgroups and other activities.

As parents and caregivers, we can "Create the Calm" by:

- Creating a safe and comfortable space where children can share their feelings and worries
- Taking time to be an active listener and validate their worries and concerns
- Creating a routine at home to help reduce worries and create some normalcy
- Introducing fun and interesting activities to avoid boredom and improve their moods. Remember - silliness helps to reduce worry and fear.
- Spending quality time as a family, eg: playing a game, going outside, or just being silly.



RECIPE OF THE WEEK

Baking together in the kitchen is a great way to foster math skills (measuring and counting), fine motor skills (pouring and stirring), focus and attention (following directions and waiting their turn) and it promotes healthy choices and confidence.

Monster Cookie Energy Balls

2 1/2 cups whole old-fashioned oats
1 cup creamy or crunchy peanut butter (or soy butter)
1/2 cup honey
1 teaspoon vanilla extract
1/2 cup mini chocolate chips
1/2 cup mini M&M's



1. Combine all ingredients into a mixing bowl. Shape into balls, about 1" in size or whatever size you prefer! Place on a small cookie sheet or large plate. Refrigerate for 30 minutes. Store leftovers covered in the fridge.
2. If your hands are getting too sticky and messy, spray them with cooking spray to help prevent from sticking.

For more cooking ideas and activities, check out www.togetherasfamily.com.

WHERE IS HOME?

Home is where the heart can be found.
Home is where your feet are planted on the ground.
Home is where you feel cherished and loved.
Home is where the sun shines all day.
Home is where it is safe to play.
Home is where I can really be found.

By Samantha Crooks, age 10



WE ARE STILL HERE FOR YOU!

Yes, things have changed a lot over the past month, but we are still here to help! Haldimand-Norfolk REACH is considered an essential service, and even though our sites are closed, we are working at home to stay connected with everyone, and to help those in need during these turbulent times.

If you or your child are in crisis, our Child and Youth Crisis Line is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. 1-866-327-3224

Feel free to find us on Facebook - we are the Haldimand-Norfolk REACH EarlyON Child and Family Centre! We're always posting activity ideas, circle time videos and stories, and tips to stay healthy at home.

Have an idea you'd like to see us try? Email us at earlyon@hnreach.on.ca

