

# MENTAL HEALTH 101

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# MENTAL HEALTH ON A CONTINUUM



# MENTAL HEALTH FACTS

- **1 in 5** children/youth in Ontario have been diagnosed with a mental illness
- **5 in 6** will not get the support they are needing
- **STIGMA** is the number one reason many don't get the help they are needing
- Mental illness is a complex combination of genetic (biological) and environmental factors

# COMMON MENTAL ILLNESSES

- **ANXIETY:**

- Significant feelings of prolonged and intense **fear**

- **DEPRESSION:**

- Intense, chronic feelings of sadness and/or loss of interest in doing activities you used to do

- **ADHD:**

- Inattentive, hyperactive and impulsive

# EARLY WARNING SIGNS

- No interest in usual activities, withdrawing from peers and family
- Eating or sleeping too much or too little (notable change)
- Rapid or dramatic shift in feelings or 'mood swings'
- Poor concentration, poor memory
- Lack of motivation; having low or no energy

# WHERE YOU CAN GO FOR HELP

- Talk to your family doctor :
  - Make a list of observations made by you as parent (home) as well as school staff (letter upon request)
  - Assessment of physical health
  - Potential referral to pediatrician or to child psychiatrist



# WHERE YOU CAN GO FOR HELP



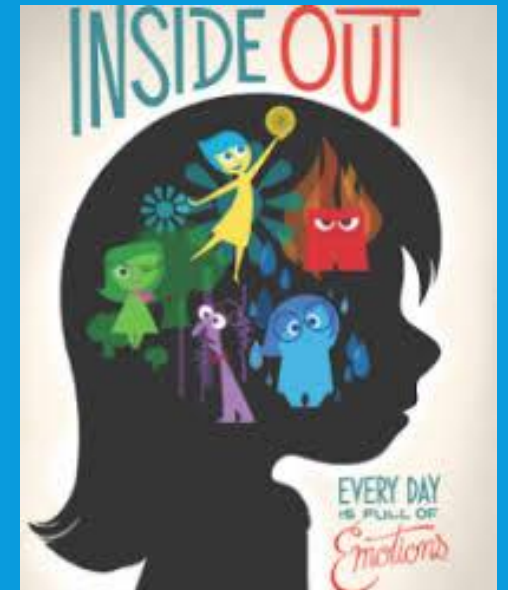
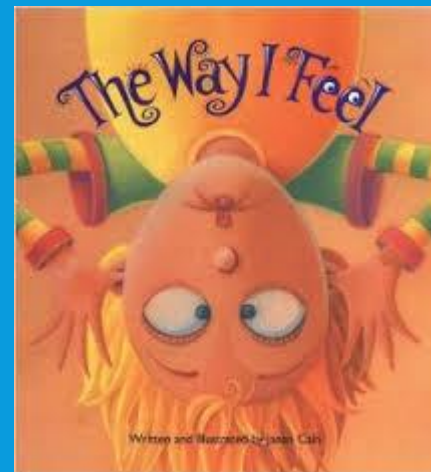


# THINGS YOU CAN DO

- Talk to your child about emotions and healthy ways of expressing them
- Practice healthy coping/calming strategies (see handout)
- Model healthy choices-sleep hygiene, good nutrition, physical exercise

# THINGS YOU CAN DO

- Talk about Emotions
- There are over 600 words to describe emotions
- The link between emotion regulation and emotional literacy – gaining self-control



# THINGS YOU CAN DO

- Calming Strategies (see handout)
  - Meditation/ Mindfulness
  - Deep breathing
- Use of (free!) Apps
  - Headspace
  - Calm
  - Mindshift



# THINGS TO DO

- Sleep hygiene:
  - children aged 6-13 years old need 10 hours of sleep
  - Routine of quiet and relaxation before going to bed
  - Limit screen time at least an hour before bed
- Physical exercise:
  - Reduces stress, improves mood, positive impact on sleep and appetite
- Nutritional foods:
  - Breakfast every day!



# TAKE HOME MESSAGES

- You play an important role in your child's mental well being
- Practice calming strategies every day to reduce the impact of stress
- Seek professional support when you feel there may be a concern

