

# THE IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON THE MENTAL WELL-BEING OF TEENS

## & WHAT DO TEENS NEED TO DO WELL

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# ROAD MAP

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- Begin and End with an Experiential Exercise
- Look briefly at impact of Pandemic
- Developmental Frame for Teenagers
- How can we support Teenagers
- whole Child Approach
- Questions
- Resources

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# EXPERIENTIAL EXERCISE



*We are not all in the  
same boat. We are  
all in the same  
storm. Some are on  
super-yachts. Some  
have just the one  
oar.*

— Damian Barr (@Damian\_Barr) April 21, 2020

[The Full poem](#)

[image by Barbara Kelley from a  
Wall Street Journal opinion piece](#)

# THE IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON YOUTH MENTAL HEALTH

66%

of youth said their mental health had gotten worse

Over 60%

of youth reported feeling worried, upset, sad, angry, missing friends and uncertainty

59%

of parents noted behavioural, emotional, personality, +/- sleep changes in their child

28%

of youth reported a worsening of family stress

# WHY IS THE PANDEMIC ESPECIALLY HARD ON YOUTH?

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1. Brain Development - Emotions, reasoning, flexible thinking
1. social independence and social identity
1. Risk taking and novelty seeking - a time of creativity and exploration

# MENTAL ILLNESS + THE PANDEMIC

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"Struggling to cope with the pandemic...is not a matter of  
mental illness"...

it is just that... "struggling to cope

*quote from R. Berman 12/2020 in article*

# UNWELCOME CHALLENGES

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"Few of us will get through an entire lifetime without our resilience being seriously challenged by the pain & suffering inherent in the human condition.....The way to respond with skill to such unwelcomed challenges is through resilience.....Resilience is the capacity to respond to pressures and tragedies quickly, adaptively and effectively"

Linda Graham (Bouncing Back-Rewiring Your Brain for maximum Resilience and well-Being)



# THE PANDEMIC + RESILIENCE

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I'm not afraid of storms, for I'm  
learning to sail my ship.

~ Louise May Alcott

[www.thesocialtimesmagazine.com](http://www.thesocialtimesmagazine.com)



# RESILIENCE?

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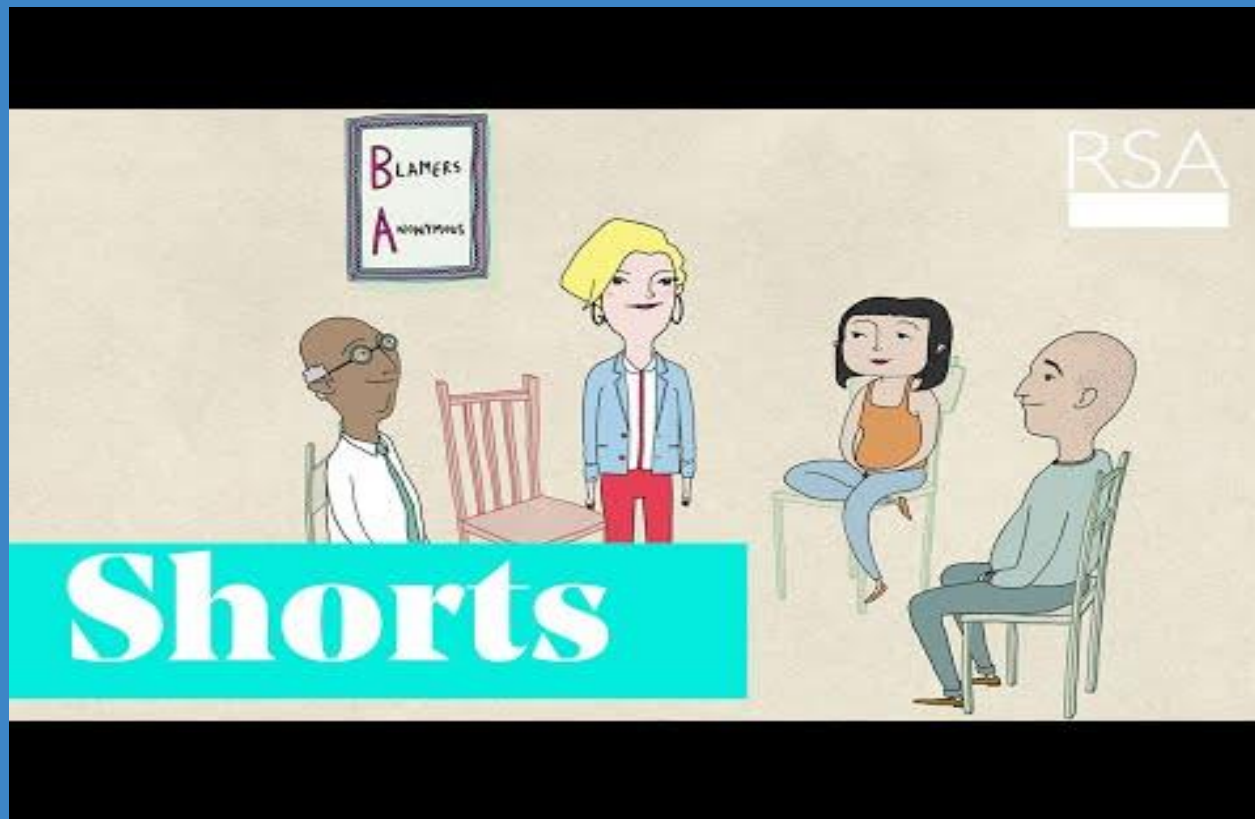
Resilience is more about steering through adversity moment by moment and learning from it.....

It's not about being tough, soldiering on, and not showing emotions or asking for help

It involves dialing down the inner critic, not engaging in the blame/ shame game and allowing emotions like compassion, empathy and gratitude to show-up, so that one can be involved and engaged, especially when challenged.

# DR. BRENE' BROWN

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# LET'S BREAK THIS DOWN + DIVE DEEPER .....

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1. To feel safe, understood and Accepted
2. To be Socially Connected, have a Sense of Belonging and to feel part of a Common Humanity
3. To Develop a Sense of Mastery, feel Competent and have a Sense of Purpose
4. To be Flexible and Grow their Sense of Identity

# 1. TO FEEL SAFE, UNDERSTOOD AND ACCEPTED

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- Be there and be present
- Balance support with independence
- Ask! Listen! Normalize the feelings. It's OK to be stressed.
- Model coping with the emotions and changes.
- Help build coping strategies -- Practice paying positive attention and showing gratitude.
- Recognize signs of stress.

## 2. TO HAVE SOCIAL CONNECTION, A SENSE OF BELONGING, + PART OF COMMON HUMANITY

- Connecting at home - routines, hugs
- Know and look for their Helpers. e.g. mental health supports, valued group connections (e.g. LGBTQ+)
- Use opportunities to connect them to common human experiences
- Teach them that they are part of a bigger whole - Teach them to be helpers

### 3. A SENSE OF MASTERY, TO FEEL COMPETENT

#### AND TO HAVE PURPOSE

- Is your Teen feeling competent with schoolwork?
- Is there other areas in life where they feel competent? Seeking a source for independence and growth
- Let them be part of the problem solving process
- Connect to something of value
- Teach them to BE Helpers - home, community, the world

# 4. TO BE FLEXIBLE AND GROW THEIR SENSE OF

## IDENTITY Help youth....:

- Develop multiple ways to see themselves
- Practice seeing different perspectives
- Focus on what they can control





# SOCIAL EMOTIONAL LEARNING (SEL)



- whole child approach
- Healthy, safe, inclusive, engaged, supported & challenged
- Based on Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs

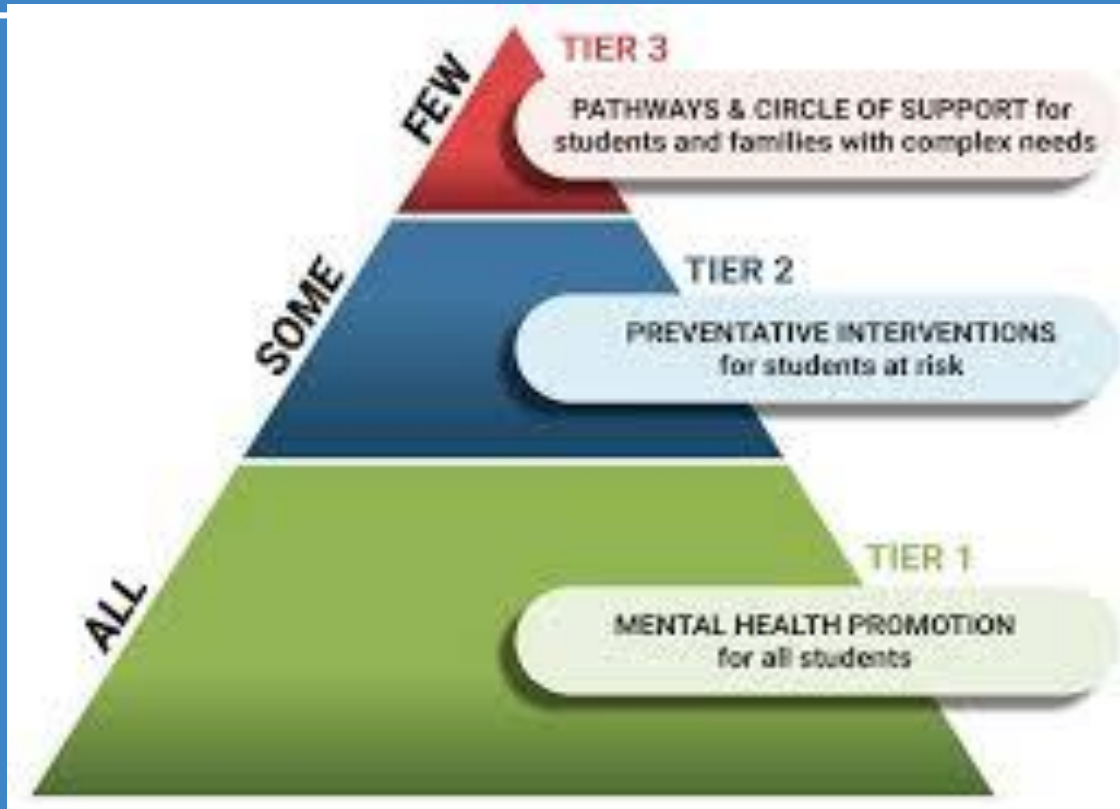
# SOCIAL EMOTIONAL LEARNING (SEL)

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SEL has tremendous potential to create the conditions for youth agency and civic engagement and, ultimately, social change. We owe our students an education that centers on their lives and explicitly addresses the sociopolitical context. This will not only prepare our students to engage civically and peacefully across difference, but also to become the changemakers and leaders we need.

Dena Simmons - assistant director at the Yale Center for Emotional Intelligence (ASCD)

# THE TIERED APPROACH TO SEL



# SIGNS OF MENTAL HEALTH ISSUES IN CHILDREN

Is your child experiencing any of these?

- Extreme outbursts or excessive mood swings
- Worrying so much that they are getting stomach aches or headaches
- Persistent nightmares and lack of sleep
- Avoiding formerly enjoyable activities, including spending time with friends
- Unusually quiet, sad or reserved, preoccupied
- Change in appetite - eating considerably less, or more.

If uncertain or if your child is asking for help, reach out for support: [call your physician or a child and youth mental health centre near you.](#) (FindHelp cmho.org)



As we walk alongside our teens in a time of calamity:

- Teach to look for helpers
- Teach to be helpers
- Listen
- Be There, Be Present

Moms and dads can never foresee or prepare for every struggle our children will have to endure. But parents possess a wealth of wisdom, instinct, and knowledge to draw from. We know our children deeply. We have an intuitive sense of what they need from us, even when the particulars of a new situation take time to puzzle through..... They need us not only to speak our truths, but to listen deeply to theirs. We need to tell our young students, through words and actions, that they are loved. To make sure they know that while they might have to face some sad and scary parts of the world, they'll never have to face them alone."

"We may not have all the answers, but we can give children our care -  
and our presence"

(J. Minkel, Educator)

In a Time of Calamity, what Do Children Need from us? - Educational Leadership

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# EXPERIENTIAL EXERCISE

# COMMUNITY RESOURCES FOR MENTAL HEALTH

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## Kids Help Phone

Phone, chat or text helpline

**Here 24/7** <https://here247.ca/> 1-844-437-3247 (HERE247)

Addictions, Mental Health and Crisis Services Waterloo-Wellington

## ConnexOntario

For addiction, mental health and problem gambling treatment services for those 18 and over

## School Mental Health Ontario

Resources for students, parents and educators.

[Supporting The Mental Health And Well-Being of Students Who Will Return To School Remotely](#)

**\*\*In a mental health emergency, please call 9-1-1 or visit your closest emergency department.**



# OTHER HELPFUL WELL-BEING RESOURCES

[Access our COVID-19 Well-Being Toolkit and Resources](#) centerhealthyminds.org

COVID-19 Wellbeing Toolkit and Resources

[Try Our Free App for Guided, Mindful Meditation](#)

[Greater Good's Guide to Well-Being During](#) Coronavirus: Practices, resources and articles for individuals, parents, educators and health care professionals facing COVID-19 [Greater Good in Action](#) - Toolkit and practices for mental wellnes

[Pandemic Parenting](#) -Webinars and recordings on relevant topics.

[School Mental Health Ontario - Practical resources to support student mental health during COVID-19](#) -Resources for students, parents and educators.

[Supporting The Mental Health And Well-Being of Students Who Will Return To School Remote Move This World](#) - Mental Health Resources