

2024-2025 S.T.E.P.S. TO MENTALLY HEALTHY SCHOOLS

Professional Support Services
Child and Youth Counsellors, Social Workers &
Attendance Services



September 2024
to
June 2025



Professional
Support Services



Mental Health
& Well-Being

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2024-2025 Mental Health Action Plan Journey

Leading Pathways to Identity-Affirming Mental Health Support

Professional Support Services (PSS) staff that directly support the mental health and well being of students include Social Workers, Attendance Counsellors, and Child and Youth Counsellors, are pivotal in advancing the board's equity-driven, identity-affirming mental health strategy. The impact of these efforts is driven by 180 PSS members whose dedication continues to transform schools into spaces of care, dignity, and thriving.

Their work aligns with [TDSB's Three-Year Mental Health and Addictions Strategy](#) goals which are framed in the strategy's S.T.E.P.S. to Mentally Healthy Schools. This report will highlight the tiered mental health initiatives completed in 2024-2025. Details for these mental health initiatives can be found here: [Detailed 2024-2025 Mental Health Initiatives](#).

In 2024-2025, PSS exceeded the commitments outlined in the [2024-2025 Mental Health Action Plan](#). PSS has delivered impactful Tier 1, Tier 2, and Tier 3 supports grounded in trauma-informed, anti-oppressive practices, transforming the mental health landscape for students, staff, and families. The TDSB Tiered Mental Health initiatives align with the School Mental Health Ontario's (SMHO) [Right Care, Right Time Strengthening Ontario's Mental Health and Addictions System of Care for Children and Young People](#).

Tiered Mental Health Framework:

Tier 1 & 2 Initiatives:

- Social Workers delivered a total of **1,865 Tier 1 and 2 mental health sessions** across the TDSB, addressing critical topics such as Abuse and Neglect, Anti-Sex Trafficking, Substance Use, Suicide Prevention, Trauma-Informed Care, and Boundaries and Consent. These sessions, which also included initiatives like Gender and Sexuality Alliance groups, Conflict Resolution



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circles, and culturally responsive supports such as the Newcomer Girls Group and Healthy Masculinity programs, directly impacted approximately **110,000 elementary and secondary students**.

- Of the 110,000 students, 23 Child and Youth Counsellors (CYCs) delivered over **120 Tier 2 initiatives across 100+ schools, impacting 39,000 students**. These initiatives focused on topics like Kindness & Leadership, Conflict Resolution, Healthy Relationships, Mental Health Literacy, and Online Safety.

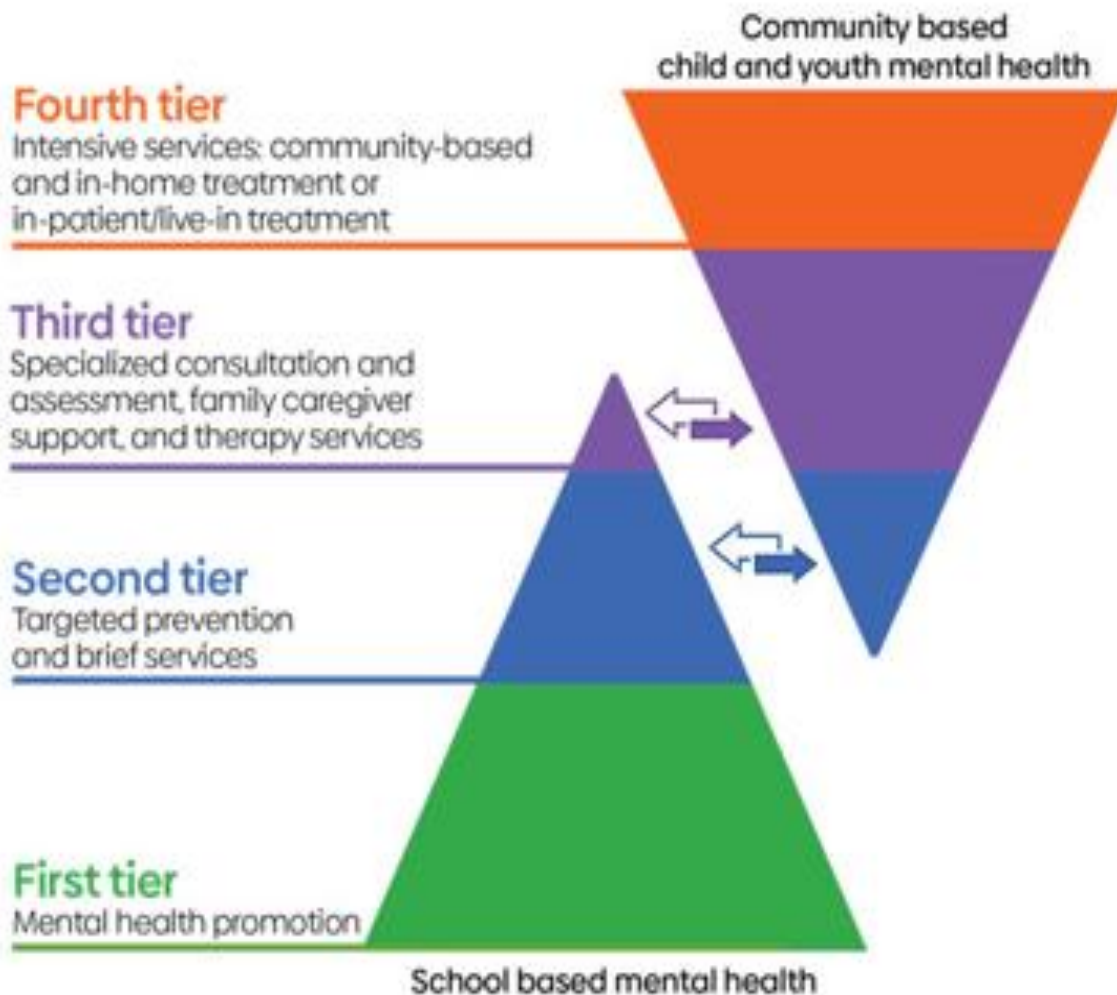
Tier 3 Interventions:

- Social Workers provided one-on-one support to **7,453 students and families**.
- Supported crises and critical incidents, with an increased 9% in support time (*11 days per month per Social Worker*).
- CYCs delivered counseling to **1,236 students**.
- Attendance Counsellors assisted **3,537 students with school re-engagement**.



PSS's work is a cornerstone in advancing the TDSB's mental health initiatives, ensuring systemic support, and fostering belonging, identity-affirmation, and emotional wellness across the board.

In the Appendices, you will find how these Mental Health Initiatives aligned with the S.T.E.P.S. to Positive Mental Health and how they supported TDSB's Key Performance Indicators (KPIs).



From School Mental Health Ontario: <https://smho-smso.ca/school-administrators/think-in-tiers-about-student-mental-health/>

Tier 1 Mental Health Initiatives

Staff Training: Strengthening Mentally Healthy School Communities

In 2024–2025, Professional Support Services (PSS) delivered just over 900 Tier 1 staff training sessions, reaching approximately 26,000 staff across TDSB schools. These sessions were key in strengthening system-wide capacity for mental health promotion, early intervention, fostering belonging and inclusive school environments.

The Tier 1 learnings also emphasized recognizing early signs of sex trafficking, suicidality, trauma, and mental health literacy, providing educators with the tools to identify distress and mobilize timely, identity-affirming support. Grounded in trauma-informed, anti-racist, and anti-oppressive frameworks, these trainings cultivate mentally healthy spaces where students, staff, and families thrive. This comprehensive, relational effort ensures that mental health is deeply embedded in daily school life, supported by culturally responsive care and strong community partnerships, making wellness a sustained priority across TDSB.



Westview Centennial

TIER 1 PRESENTATIONS BY PSS STAFF	NUMBER OF SCHOOL-BASED PRESENTATIONS	NUMBER OF STAFF (APPROX.)
Abuse & Neglect of Students	34	1,020
Anti-Sex Trafficking-Know the Signs; Know Your Responsibility	44	1320
Foundational Mental Health Shared Language	42	1260
Substance Use/Abuse & Addictions	9	270
Suicide Protocol (PR 726)	346	10,380
Trauma Informed Care from an Equity, Anti-Racist and Anti-Oppression Approach	57	1710
Other (i.e. Mental Health Literacy; Newcomer Wellness)	372	11,160
TOTAL TIER 1 PRESENTATIONS	904	27, 120

**approx. 30 staff in each session*

Tier 1 & 2 Mental Health Initiatives

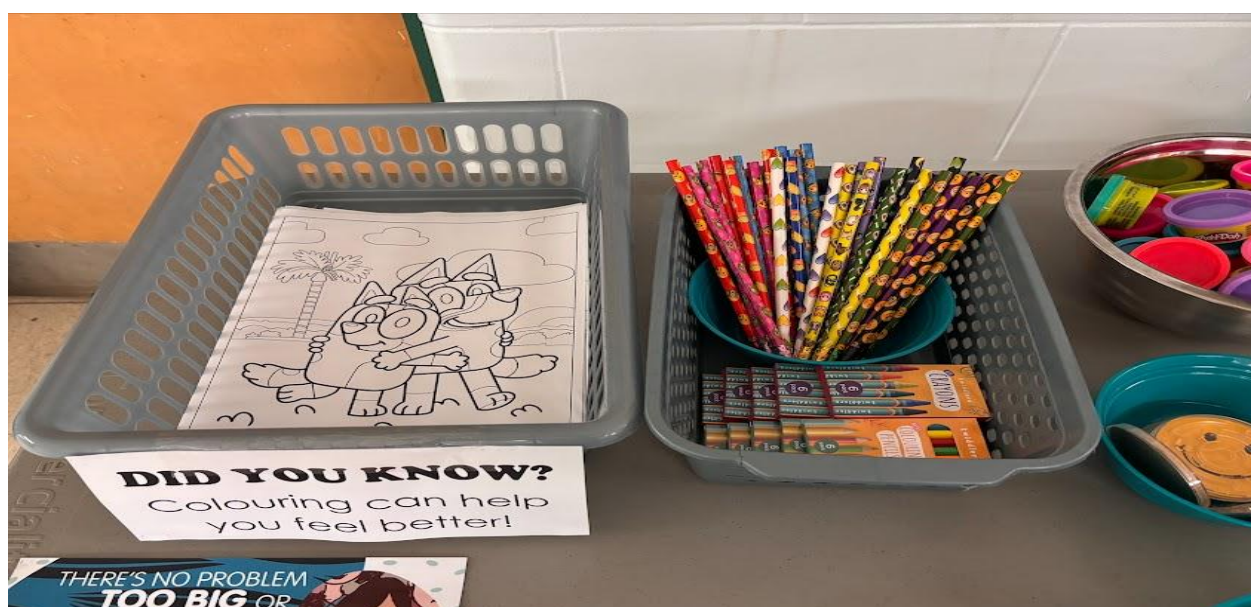
School Communities: Mental Health Capacity Building

In 2024–2025, under the leadership of PSS staff and school-based teams, Tier 1 and 2 mental health initiatives were launched across the district, engaging over 110,000 students within school communities. Initiatives ranged from student-led programs such as the Mental Health Student Ambassadors, CYC-led projects and culturally responsive programs such as Roots2Rise, Gender Independent Groups, and Student Black Affinity Spaces.

A snapshot of the school community initiatives include:

- **875** parents/caregivers reached through digital safety and mental health events.
- Approximately **1167 families** engaged through virtual and in-person developmental disability Community Fairs.
- Over students **36,000** participated in violence prevention and anti-sex trafficking education in collaboration with community partners.
- We had close to **600** Community and Families receiving anti-sex trafficking information.

These initiatives reflect TDSB's commitment to equity, well-being, and providing culturally responsive, identity-affirming resources to ensure that students, staff, and families thrive in inclusive and mentally healthy school communities. The chart below highlights selected some of the Mental Health Initiatives with engagement outcomes:





T.E.A.R. Student Led Resource Wall-Hayden Park

Digital Citizenship Teams

Now I know how to keep myself safe online and help my friends do the same. – Grade 7 Student



Anti-Sex Trafficking Grade 8 Summit

Now I know the warning signs and how to keep myself and my friends safe—Grade 7 Student

Selected Mental Health Initiatives

Engagement

Mental Health Student Ambassadors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 455 Initiatives • 300 Students • 50 Schools
Abuse & Neglect Policy Focus Groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 5 Virtual Focus Groups • 22 Community Partners • 54 Staff, Parents and Students
Affinity Spaces	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social Work/CYC • Supporting MSA, JSA, BSW and GIG consultation with students, parents and community
Alt-9 Zine	9 Alternative West End Schools with 50 students.
AST Collaborative	Met in January and June-22 community partners
AST Female Symposium	300 Students and 200 Staff and Community Partners
AST Grade 8 Summit	250 Grade 8 students and 19 High School Mentors and 200 Community and Staff
AST Male Symposium	180 Students and 170 Community and Staff
AST Training Modules	Since 2022 we have had 274 Staff have taken it
Catch My Breath Anti-Vaping	10 Secondary Schools
Child and Youth Services Poster Contest	110 Students participated from K-12
Courageous Conversations PD	200 Staff participated
CYC-Led Mental Health Initiatives	120 Mental health initiatives in 100 schools 39,000 Students
Developmental Disabilities In-Person Connect	667 Families Attended
Developmental Disabilities Virtual Connect	6 Virtual Drop-ins and 500 Families attending
Digital Citizenship Teams	50 Schools & over 100 students
Digital Safety Parent Events	5 Evening Community Sessions with 875 attending
Elementary ABR Workshop Series	Since 2021 1100 students grades 1-6
Exercise2Success (E2S)	1473 Students and 25 schools with 60 Student Leaders

Farm to Cafeteria	Pilot at NACI for all Students through a grant by school social worker
FOCUS Tables & SafeTO	Majority Mental Health 27 Submissions; 47 Lead and 164 Assisting
FOY & Mental Health Leads Learning/re-Learning to Cope Leadership Program	400 Students have participated with 37 in 2025; over 500 creative mental health art projects
Gender Identity Group Events	35 students and 40 caregivers attending weekly GIG Events
Healthy Masculinity Groups	Don Mills CI/MS: 120 Male Students from grades 7-12
Healthy Relationships w/TPH	400 Grade 7/8 students in 16 Middle Schools
Into Kid's Health	18 Schools with 1000's of students and adding 20 more for the 2025/26 school year
Mental Health Literacy Training	1063 Staff Trained
MH & Addictions Collaborative	30 community partners
MH Studio & Podcasting	Summer: 5 Students and plans for monthly pod casting by students and staff
MyOWL Program	16 Middle schools with approximately 450 students
Relational Spaces (Faywood etc.)	Faywood ABC: 40 Students
Roots2Rise Conference	135 Black Male Students and 5 High Schools
SafeTALK for Teens	138 Students and 6 High Schools
SAPACCY Program "Let's Talk the Talk Training"	33 Students at Westview CSS
T.E.A.R. Program	8 MID/DD High Schools with 160 students participating
TDSB Mental Health Leads	PL: safeTALK; Trauma Informed and Mental Health Literacy
Transition to High School – Secondary Congregated Sites	23 High Schools involved for congregated/integrated schools
Trauma Training from an Equity Lens	Trauma Informed: 989 Staff
TTC Safety Program	3 High Schools and 90 Students in collaboration with the City of Toronto and TTC
Understanding ADHD and Neurodiversity	100 CYS staff participated in PL
Victim Services Virtual Symposium	Virtual anti-sex trafficking & anti-violence symposium with 24, 951 students and 86 schools
Westview Black Affinity Space	30 Students with Chris Leonard supporting Black Affinity and Healing Spaces
Youth Outreach Worker & SW Connection Events	150 Social Work Staff and 100 YOWs to co-create Mental Health initiatives for schools

Tier 1 & 2 Mental Health Initiatives

Categorized Select Mental Health Initiatives

To further showcase the tremendous impact of Social Workers, Attendance Counsellors, and Child and Youth Counsellors, we have thoughtfully categorized a selection of their mental health initiatives into these seven strategic focus areas. This framework highlights the breadth, depth, and intentional equity-driven approach behind their vital work supporting students' well-being and belonging across the TDSB:

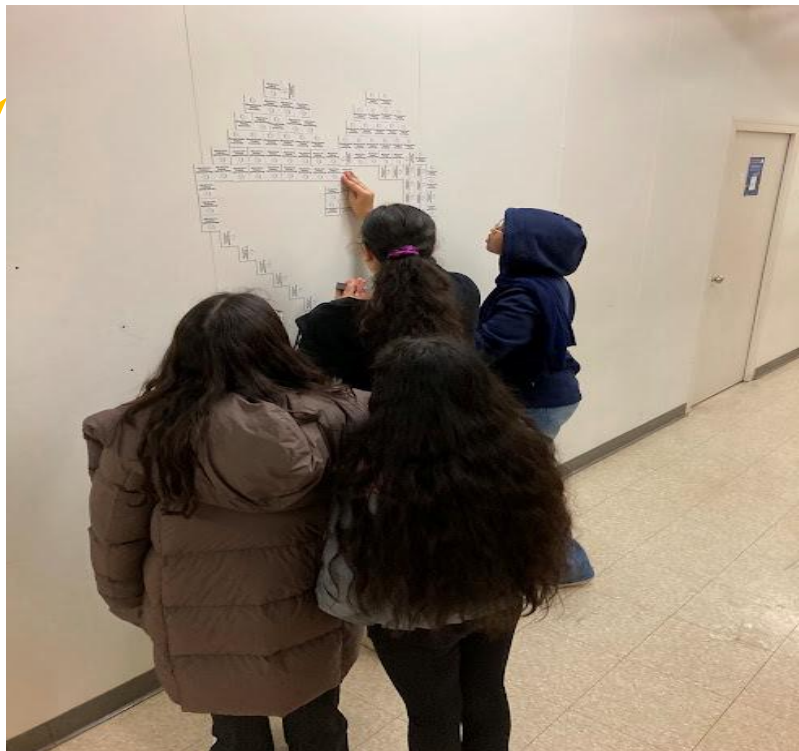
1. Student Leadership & Belonging
2. Healthy Relationships & Consent
3. Violence Prevention & Community Safety
4. Anti-Sex Trafficking Response
5. Suicide Prevention
6. Mental Health Literacy & Substance Use
7. Trauma-Informed, Identity-Affirming & Targeted Supports

These categories reflect a layered, equity-driven approach, aligned with the TDSB Mental Health and Addictions Strategy. Initiatives advance early intervention, culturally responsive care, and school safety, all while fostering inclusive, mentally healthy school communities.

Mental Health Student Ambassadors

I feel so much more connected to school as an ambassador—
Grade 10 Student

Being an ambassador made me realize I can change my school for the better starting with kindness.”— Grade 8 Student





Mental Health Student Ambassadors

I was shy at first but working with Thiago (CYC) as a mental health ambassador, I helped run wellness groups and feel so much more confident and happy!-Grade 5 Student



Anti-Sex Trafficking Symposiums

"I feel stronger, safer, and ready to speak up. I also learned a lot about healthy relationships" – Grade 9 Student

"Hearing real stories made me realize this can happen anywhere, and that we all have a role in preventing it." – Grade 10 Student

Categorized Mental Health Initiatives

Student Voice, Leadership & Mental Health Promotion

Selected Tier 1 & 2 Mental Health Initiatives

- ✓ Mental Health Student Ambassador Program
- ✓ Students4Wellbeing
- ✓ Focus on Youth Mental Health Leadership Spring Program
- ✓ Exercise2Success
- ✓ Mental Health Podcast and Recording Studio
- ✓ Child and Youth Services Mental Health Poster Contest
- ✓ Alt-9 Zine Mental Health
- ✓ Leadership Mental Health Training
- ✓ Student-Led Mental Health Clubs
- ✓ Creative Arts Projects
- ✓ Art Walls and Virtual Mental Health Art Museum
- ✓ Mentorship Programs between Secondary Students and MHSA's
- ✓ Community Nights and Mental Health Fairs
- ✓ Mental Health in the 6ix w/ City of Toronto
- ✓ Roots2Rise w/ City of Toronto
- ✓ Teen Talk Tuesdays
- ✓ Wellness Day Leadership Group
- ✓ jack.org Mental Health Daily & Weekly Lesson Plans
- ✓ Wellness Committee
- ✓ Wellness Fair
- ✓ Student Voice Panels
- ✓ Positive Mental Health for International Students with Hong Fook

<p>Healthy Relationships, Consent & Gender-Based Supports</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ TEAR (all variations) ✓ Healthy Relationships (all versions) ✓ Boundaries & Consent (all variations) ✓ Consent & Boundaries Modules ✓ Healthy Masculinity Boys Groups ✓ Girls' SEL Group ✓ Sisterhood Group ✓ Boys Leadership Group ✓ GSA (all versions) ✓ Gender Identity Events ✓ MSA, BSA, JSA, MSA, GIG ✓ Female-Identifying Groups ✓ Male-Identifying Groups ✓ Connection Club (ASD Social Skills) ✓ Start Right Social Skills Group ✓ Social Skills & Boundaries ✓ Friendship Groups ✓ Bi-Weekly Girls' Groups
<p>Violence Prevention, Community Safety & Belonging Initiatives</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Victim Services Anti-Violence Symposium ✓ TTC Safety and Well-Being Program ✓ Community Integrated Safety Tables ✓ Youth Outreach Events w/ Social Workers ✓ Focus on Youth Museum ✓ SafeTO Integrated Response w/PSS and CCRP ✓ Digital Citizenship Teams ✓ Anti-Bullying Workshops ✓ Cyber Literacy ✓ Digital Safety Events ✓ Hot Chocolate Chit Chat ✓ Kindness Campaigns ✓ Buddy Benches ✓ Restorative Justice ✓ Anti-Black Racism (all variations) ✓ Black Joy as Resistance ✓ BIPOC Speaker Series ✓ ABR and Courageous Conversations ✓ Courageous Conversations for PSS Staff

Anti-Sex Trafficking Education & Prevention	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Grade 8 AST Summit ✓ AST Events in Schools ✓ Female-Identifying AST Symposium ✓ Male-Identifying AST Symposium ✓ MyPath Curriculum for Anti-Sex Trafficking ✓ Anti-Sex Trafficking ✓ Digital Safety Events
Suicide Awareness, Prevention & Postvention	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ safeTALK ✓ safeTALK for Teens ✓ MyOWL ✓ Teens and Depression ✓ Suicide Prevention Groups ✓ Grief Support (all versions) ✓ Teen Talk Tuesdays
Mental Health Literacy & Substance Use Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Mental Health Literacy ✓ Catch My Breath-Anti-Vaping Curriculum ✓ Substance Use/Abuse PD ✓ Substance Abuse Program for African Canadian and Caribbean Youth (CAMH) ✓ CAMH 'Let's Talk the Talk' Program ✓ CHAT CVT Peer Leadership ✓ Mental Health and Well-Being Toolkit ✓ Presentation: What is Mental Health ✓ Mental Health Resources for Staff ✓ Mental Health Leadership Group ✓ Mental Health and Wellness Committee ✓ Mental Health and Wellbeing (all variations) ✓ Using my Voice – Mental Health Awareness ✓ Mental Health Studio & Podcasting ✓ Daily Wellness Breaks ✓ Lunch Mental Health Drop-Ins ✓ Self-Care Activities ✓ Mental Health Initiatives ✓ Mental Health Ambassador Program (all variations)

Trauma-Informed, Identity-Affirming & Targeted Supports

- ✓ Trauma Training
- ✓ Zones of Regulation PD
- ✓ ADHD & Neurodiversity PD
- ✓ Calming Rooms
- ✓ Sensory Tools
- ✓ Movement & Mindfulness
- ✓ Yoga
- ✓ Wellness Rooms
- ✓ Self-Reg Workshops
- ✓ Emotion Coaching
- ✓ Stress Kits
- ✓ Healing Circles w/ Community
- ✓ Affirming Workshops for Students and Parents
- ✓ Gender Independent Groups
- ✓ Black Affinity Spaces
- ✓ Mental Health & Identity Affirming Workshops
- ✓ Therapeutic Circles
- ✓ Neurodiverse Sensory Supports
- ✓ Daily Accessible Mindfulness Practices
- ✓ Mindfulness (all versions)
- ✓ Anxiety Support (all versions)
- ✓ Sleep Hygiene
- ✓ Tree of Life Workshop
- ✓ Supporting Social Skills Group (CDI)



Mental Health Student Ambassadors-Daily
Mental Health Initiatives-Edgewood P.S

Tier 1 & 2 Mental Health

Selected PSS Collaborations with Community Partners

This chart illustrates the depth, reach, and impact of Tier 1 and Tier 2 mental health programming led by TDSB's PSS in close partnership with an extraordinary network of identity-affirming community organizations. Together, social workers, attendance counsellors, child and youth counsellors, and specialized community partners have built seamless bridges between schools and external supports ensuring that students and families not only access mental health care, but experience it in culturally responsive, trauma-informed, and strength-based ways.

From anti-sex trafficking prevention and Black student wellness initiatives to gender-affirming groups, digital safety education, and collaborative violence prevention, these initiatives embody the belief that mental health thrives when school and community act as one. The collective efforts captured here are not just programs they are lifelines of belonging, safety, and identity affirming, shaping resilient pathways for thousands of students and families across Toronto.

Initiative Name	Community Partners Involved	Description / Activities	Student / Family Reach or Impact
Anti-Sex Trafficking (AST) Collaborative	Toronto Police Service (Human Trafficking Unit and Internet Child Exploitation Unit), SickKids SCAN Unit, Victim Services Toronto, Montage Support, White Ribbon, Native Child and Family Services, Mary Ward Centre, One Child, 360°kids, FCJ Refugee Centre, Aura Freedom, Boost for Kids, Native Women's Resource Centre of Toronto, Strides Toronto, Urban	22 community agencies partnering to strengthen AST initiatives with education, awareness, trauma-informed care, and prevention across the system.	System-wide support; ongoing collaborations for rapid responsive student/family supports.

	Indigenous Education Centre (UIEC), others		
Anti-Sex Trafficking and Anti-Violence Virtual Symposium	Victim Services of Toronto	Numerous modules on healthy masculinity, intimate partner violence, healthy relationships, consent and positive mental health	Reached 24, 951 students and staff
Anti-Sex Trafficking OneChild.ca Presentations	OneChild.ca	83 presentations across 35 schools covering grades 7-12, focusing on trafficking awareness and prevention.	Reached 10,470 students and educators.
Anti-Sex Trafficking Summit (Grades 7-8)	Covenant House; Victim Services of Toronto and TDSB PSS staff	30 Community partners	469 participants of which were 250 grade 7-8 students, 19 secondary school mentors and 200 community partners.
Anti-Sex Trafficking Symposiums (Secondary Students)	Toronto Police Services, Internet Child Exploitation Unit; Victim Services of Toronto; Covenant House; TDSB PSS Staff	30 Community partners supported 2 symposiums throughout the school year for secondary students	10 Secondary Schools with 480 students participation and 370 adults (community partners) participating
Black Affinity Space Support at Westview Centennial SS	Community partner Chris Leonard, Social Workers, CYCs	Healing circles providing identity-affirming support, addressing trauma, building belonging.	30 students engaged; ongoing model for Black youth well-being and safety.
CAMH LITT Program	CAMH, TDSB Mental Health Staff	Culturally grounded mental health and addictions education for Black-identifying youth.	40 students at Westview Centennial Secondary School.

Catch My Breath Anti-Vaping Program	Toronto Public Health, Ontario Tech University, PSS	Evidence-based vaping prevention curriculum delivered in 10 secondary schools as part of a research study.	Schools contribute to provincial understanding of vaping prevention effectiveness.
Developmental Disabilities Virtual Connect (DDVC)	Community agencies co-leading sessions with Social Work Services and PSS	Monthly virtual sessions on community supports, autism, funding, recreation, transition to adulthood, long-term planning.	Over 500 families supported through virtual drop-in events. And 300 families supported during the inaugural in person event on May 3, 2025.
Digital Safety: Parents Roadmap Events	City of Toronto Youth Outreach Workers, Toronto Police ICE Unit, digital safety experts	Parent and caregiver engagement events in key communities to support safe digital use.	1,700+ parents/caregivers registered; 875 attendees at five events.
Farm to Cafeteria Initiative	School social workers, Food and Nutrition staff	Program connecting students with fresh food, food literacy, and entrepreneurship opportunities.	North Albion Collegiate Institute students and growing.
FOCUS Tables & SafeTO ISCTs	City of Toronto, United Way, Toronto Police, youth outreach workers, community safety partners	Weekly multi-agency meetings reviewing cases at elevated risk; coordinating short-term supports and rapid community violence response.	Supports students at acutely elevated risk via coordinated Circles of Care.
Gender Independent Groups (GIGs)	CTYS Families in Transition program, social workers, other PSS staff	Identity-affirming weekly groups and special events for gender diverse students and families.	120+ participants in events; 70 families registered for monthly groups.
Healthy Masculinity Boys Groups	Mental Health and Professional Support Services, school administrators	Programs promoting mental health, wellness, anti-violence, and	About 120 students across Don Mills Collegiate Institute

		leadership for male-identifying students.	and Don Mills Middle School.
Healthy Relationships & Anti-Sex Trafficking Initiative: TEAR Program	Montage Support Services, Victim Services Toronto, school social workers	4-week trauma-informed sessions for students with Developmental and Mild Intellectual Disabilities.	120 students in eight secondary congregated schools.
Healthy Relationships with Toronto Public Health Nurses & CYCs	Toronto Public Health Nurses, Child and Youth Counsellors	Co-facilitated 14-week Healthy Relationships Plus Program in 16 middle schools focused on bullying, dating violence, and mental health.	Delivered to over 400 Grade 7 and 8 students.
Into Kids Health Initiative	Toronto Public Health, TDSB PSS	Mental health, physical wellness, and emotional regulation program for elementary and middle school students.	Implemented in 17 schools (2024-25) and expanding to 20 new schools (2025-26).
Mental Health and Addiction Nurses (MHAN) & TPH Co-lead	Mental Health and Addiction Nurses, Toronto Public Health	Co-lead Chat CVT event on vaping, cannabis, tobacco, and substance use awareness.	Youth from 8 secondary schools engaged.
Mental Health and Addictions Community Collaborative	CAMH, SickKids, Sunnybrook, SAPACCY, YSAP, Breakaway, STRIDES, Naseeha, CAFCAN, TAIBU, Boost, Yorktown, Rexdale, City of Toronto Crisis Community Response Program, Mental Health and Addiction Nurses (MHAN), ECPP, CSW, Montage, Community Living	30+ partners coordinate data sharing, timely supports, culturally responsive care, and reduce service gaps for mental health and substance use.	Supports complex student and family needs; city-wide safe, caring, responsive communities.
SafeTALK for Teens	Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA), PSS, Social Workers, Child and Youth Services	Suicide alertness training for secondary students	138 students trained in 2024-25.

		delivered at multiple schools.	
SAPACCY (Substance Abuse Program for African Canadian and Caribbean Youth)	CAMH SAPACCY program, AMANI, School Mental Health Ontario (SMHO)	Targeted mental health and addictions support with group sessions, mentorship, and therapeutic dialogue.	33 Black-identifying students at Westview Centennial Secondary School.
Supporting Transition to High Schools-Secondary Congregated Sites	Child and Youth Services, Occupational Therapy, Physiotherapy, Psychology, Speech-Language Pathology, Social Work, families	Transition visits for students with disabilities and their families including school tours, resources, and relationship-building.	Supports incoming Grade 9 students in 23 secondary congregated and integrated schools.
TTC and TDSB Safety and Well Being Program	TTC PEERS team, TTC Special Constables, Toronto Police Neighbourhood Community Officers	13-week program for students focused on community safety, transit system awareness, and advocacy skills.	Approximately 30 students from each of three secondary schools.
Youth Outreach Worker & Social Worker Connection Events	City of Toronto and Provincial Youth Outreach Workers (YOWs)	Two system-wide events to build stronger school-community support pathways; engagement in Digital Safety events.	150 Social Workers and 100 YOWs participated; strengthens pathways for youth with complex needs.



Anti-Sex Trafficking Summit TDSB Partners



Boys Group-Healthy Masculinity-Don Mills CI & Don Mills Middle School

Healthy Masculinity

Being with the boys we talked about how we can see signs of abuse, unhealthy actions and that in order to support girls and women we, as boys and men, need to do the work—Grade 12

I leaned so much about the great resources in my community! I am going to go to this after school program at provides support to LGBTQ+ students—Grade 9 Student



Student Led Mental Health Community Fair-Jarvis C.I.



Great, great work from the staff and community. I connected with supports for my child--Parent

Mental Health Fair with Community-Victoria Park CI

More Testimonials

Digital Citizenship Teams

Now I know how to keep myself safe online and help my friends do the same.
– Grade 7 Student

Roots2Rise Black Male Mental Health Conference

I left feeling proud of who I am and ready to lead.– Grade 12 Student

Affinity Spaces *This is the first place I've felt fully seen at school.*– Grade 11 Student

MyOWL Suicide Prevention Program

The story helped me see my own struggles in a new way and that I'm not alone.– Grade 8 Student

safeTALK for Teens

I feel confident noticing when a friend might be struggling and knowing how to help.– Grade 11 Student

Farm to Cafeteria

I've never eaten this many fresh veggies and I actually like them!– Grade 9 Student

Exercise2Success

Moving together helped me find my people at school.– Grade 7 Student

As a new student to Canada, I found so many people to connect to and felt like I was seen—Grade 10

Black Affinity Healing Circles

It's powerful to share my story in a place where I'm understood.– Grade 11 Student

Gender Independent Groups

Here, I can just be myself no explanations needed – Grade 6

Healthy Masculinity Groups

We talked about stuff guys never talk about and it made me a better friend.– Grade 8 Student

2024-2025 Outcomes: Key Achievements



Healing, Leading, Belonging: The Power of Tiered Mental Health Supports

In every corner of the TDSB, the 2024–2025 school year marked a transformative leap forward in student mental health, belonging, and well-being. At the heart of this success stood the unwavering dedication of over 180 Professional Support Services (PSS) staff, Social Workers, Child and Youth Counsellors, and Attendance Counsellors who redefined what it means to care for a school community.

Through the implementation of nearly **2,000 Tier 1 and Tier 2** mental health initiatives and additional responsive handling **12,226 Tier 3 referrals**, PSS has mobilized a tiered system that is comprehensive and culturally responsive and impactful.

Their efforts:

- Impacted over **110,000 students** with tier 1, 2 and 3 interventions and supports with a focus identity affirming supports and care.
- Reached over **27,000 staff** through trauma-informed, equity-centered professional learning;
- Engaged **over 3000 families and caregivers** in workshops, resource nights, and culturally affirming supports;
- Delivered **almost 1000 identity-affirming programs** centring Black, Indigenous, 2SLGBTQIA+, and neurodiverse student voices.

From suicide prevention and anti-sex trafficking education, to student-led wellness campaigns and digital safety summits, the work of PSS was bold, innovative, and relentlessly compassionate. Grounded in the S.T.E.P.S. to Mentally Healthy Schools framework and aligned with the Multi-Year Strategic Plan, this team not only met every commitment in the 2024–2025 Mental Health Action Plan which continues to be inclusive, identity-affirming, and trauma-informed care.

In a time when the mental health needs of students, families, and educators have never been more urgent, PSS has shown what is possible when leadership is rooted in equity, when healing is centred in relationships, and when every child matters, feels a sense of belonging and community connection.

Gratitude



With deep gratitude, I extend my heartfelt thanks to everyone who supported the tremendous Mental Health and Well Being initiatives in the 2024-2025 school year.

To our Social Workers, Child and Youth Counsellors, and Attendance Counsellors, your steady presence, compassion, and equity-centred practice ensured students and families felt seen, heard, felt that they mattered, felt that they belonged and supported every step of the way. Thank you to the tremendous TDSB Mental Health Leads, Imani Henni and Annette Grossi—your expertise and partnership strengthened the collective impact.

To the Managers of Social Work and Attendance and the Managers of Child and Youth Services, thank you for your responsive leadership, clear guidance, and unwavering commitment to student well-being throughout the summer and the school year.

To our indispensable administrative team the PSS Office Assistants, File Clerks across Professional Support Services and Special Education & Inclusion, and the exceptional Administrative Assistant, Roshni Malhotra—your behind-the-scenes coordination, care, and attention to detail made this work possible.

To our colleagues across departments, the Centre of Excellence for Black Student Achievement, the Urban Indigenous Education Centre, Caring and Safe Schools, and Special Education & Inclusion, your advocacy and identity-affirming, trauma-informed guidance grounded this work in equity and cultural safety. To all the Administrators, educators and staff in school communities to be continuously strengthening, collaborating and supporting student well-being—such gratitude for your leadership in building mentally healthy school communities.

To our community partners and to all the **students and families** who participated and co-led these initiatives your courage, honesty, and brilliance shaped every session. You inspire us to keep learning, evolving, and building school communities where mental health, identity, and belonging are affirmed every day.

Thank you to Louise Sirisko, Associate Direct Student Learning and Equitable Outcomes, your support, care and trust in the team to lead and co-lead in developing, strengthening and sustaining mentally healthy schools is so appreciated!

With sincere appreciation to each of you for your tremendous work and collaboration—
THANK YOU.

Shameen Sandhu, Ph.D., RSW

System Leader, Mental Health & Professional Support Services

Appendices

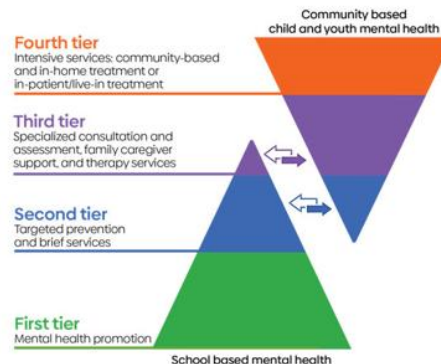


Mental Health Student Ambassadors Leadership Professional Development



Digital Safety: Parents' Roadmap Series (Malvern Resource Community Centre)

Tiered Mental Health Model



Tier 1: Universal Mental Health Promotion

- **Who it's for:** All students, Staff, Parents/Caregivers
- **Focus:** Prevention and mental wellness
- **Supports include:** Daily, identity-affirming initiatives; mental health literacy; student-led programming (e.g., Mental Health Ambassadors); trauma-informed classroom practices; culturally responsive school-wide campaigns.
- **Goal:** Ensure every student feels seen, valued, and supported in a mentally healthy school environment.

Tier 2: Targeted Early Intervention

- **Who it's for:** Students experiencing emerging mental health concerns or elevated risk
- **Focus:** Early intervention and connection
- **Supports include:** Small group programs, brief counselling, culturally responsive workshops (e.g., anxiety, transitions, healthy relationships), and skill-building facilitated by Social Workers, Attendance Counsellors and Child & Youth Counsellors.
- **Goal:** Address needs early and prevent escalation.

Tier 3: Intensive Individualized Support

- **Who it's for:** Students with significant and ongoing mental health challenges
- **Focus:** Individualized therapeutic intervention
- **Supports include:** Coordinated support plans, trauma-informed clinical care, complex case management, and collaboration with caregivers and external professionals.
- **Goal:** Stabilize and support students requiring ongoing mental health services.

Tier 4: Bridging to Community Services

- **Who it's for:** Students and families requiring ongoing or specialized services beyond school
- **Focus:** Seamless transition and system navigation
- **Supports include:** Active referrals, warm handoffs, case collaboration with community partners (e.g., STRIDES, VST, hospital-based care), and culturally safe supports embedded within trusted agencies.
- **Goal:** Ensure continuity of care and holistic support across school, home, and community.

S.T.E.P.S. To Positive Mental Health

TDSB's S.T.E.P.S. to Positive Mental Health Framework reflects our commitment to building a comprehensive, identity-affirming, and system-wide approach to student mental health. Selected examples of mental health initiatives, implemented in 2024–2025, are highlighted under each of the five interconnected focus areas which are: **Sustainable Supports, Transformative Practices, Equity in Action, Positive Engagement, and Shared Leadership**

Sustainable Mental Health

Building universal, everyday, and layered supports that promote mental health and well-being across the system.

Focus Areas:

- ✓ **Mental Health Literacy & Substance Use Education**
- ✓ **Everyday Wellness Tools & Preventative Resources**
- ✓ **Digital Resources & Universal Identity-Affirming Supports**

- **Sample Initiatives:**
 - Mental Health & Well-Being Toolkit
 - Summer 2025 Well-Being Guide
 - Into Kid's Health
 - Mental Health Literacy Curriculum (Grades 7, 8, 10)
 - Catch My Breath (Anti-Vaping Program)
 - Substance Use & Vaping Toolkit
 - Developmental Disabilities Virtual Connect (DDVC)
 - Developmental Disabilities In-Person Connect (DDVC)
 - Exercise2Success (E2S)
 - Farm to Cafeteria @ NACI
 - Tier 1 Identity-Affirming Digital Tools (Virtual Lounges, Choice Boards)
 - TDSB Mental Health & Addictions Community Collaborative
 - Roots of Empathy Professional Development (Anti-Bullying initiative)

Transforming Mental Health Practices

Strengthening professional learning, integrated supports, and trauma-informed, evidence-informed, and culturally responsive mental health approaches.

Focus Areas:

- ✓ **Trauma-Informed & Neurodiversity-Affirming Supports**
- ✓ **Suicide Awareness, Prevention, & Postvention**
- ✓ **Educator & Staff Capacity Building**

Sample Initiatives:

- Trauma-Informed Practices (Train-the-Trainer, System PD)
- safeTALK for Staff and Students
- Suicide Awareness, Prevention, Postvention Training (ASIST)
- MyOWL Suicide Prevention Program
- Staff PD: Mental Health Literacy (CUPE, Spec Ed, Music, FOY)
- Understanding ADHD & Neurodiversity (CYC PD Series)
- Mental Health Leads: Professional Learning Series
- Staff PD on Anti-Sex Trafficking (MyPath Modules)
- Reporting Child Abuse and Neglect Training
- Courageous Conversations (PSS Staff PD)

Equity in Action and Mental Health

Embedding anti-racism, anti-oppression, and culturally responsive practices that centre identity, healing, and community.

Focus Areas:

- ✓ **Identity-Affirming and Anti-Racist Mental Health Supports**
- ✓ **Black, Indigenous, 2SLGBTQIA+, and Disability-Centered Programming**
- ✓ **Culturally Grounded Substance Use and Wellness Supports**

Sample Initiatives:

- Roots2Rise: Black Male Mental Health Conference
- Black Mental Health Resources (March Campaign)
- CEBSA: Black Mental Health with Trey Anthony
- Affinity Spaces (BSAs, MSAs, GIGs, JSAs)
- Anti-Black Racism Elementary Workshop Series

- SAPACCY @ Westview
- CAMH Amani Program @ Westview
- Westview Black Affinity Circles
- Gender Identity Group Events (GIGs)
- Alt-9 Zine: Mental Health through Art & Identity
- Anti-Sex Trafficking Collaborative (22 Community Partners)
- Digital Safety & AST Videos in Multiple Languages
- Healing-Centered Practices in DD/PD/ISP Transitions

Positive Engagement

Fostering connection, re-engagement, belonging, and safety for students through everyday opportunities and targeted supports.

Focus Areas:

- ✓ **Student Voice & Leadership in Mental Health Promotion**
- ✓ **Healthy Relationships, Consent, and Positive Masculinity**
- ✓ **Violence Prevention, School Safety, and Peer Belonging**

Sample Initiatives:

- Mental Health Student Ambassadors
- Students 4 Well-Being (S4W)
- Mental Health in the 6ix
- MHSA Leadership Events (FlightUnit, Digital Safety Panel, safeTALK)
- Focus on Youth (FOY) Leadership Programs
- Digital Citizenship Teams (DCTs)
- MH Podcast Studio @ Bickford Centre
- SafeTO / FOCUS Tables
- Alternative Schools MH Programs (Alt-9, Delta)
- TTC Safety & Well-Being Program
- Healthy Masculinity Boys' Groups (Don Mills CI & MS)
- Transition to Secondary for Students with Disabilities (23 Sites)
- Anti-Bullying and Kindness Campaigns (CYC-led)
- MH Fairs, Art Installations, Spirit Days
- Peer-led Drop-Ins, Cope Clubs, Chill Spaces
- Gardening, Movement, and Mindfulness Practices
- Healthy Relationships Plus (HRP)
- TEAR Program (DD/MID Students)

Student, Parent, Staff, and Community Voice

Honouring lived experience and shared leadership to shape inclusive, responsive, and affirming mental health supports.

Focus Areas:

- ✓ **Intergenerational Engagement and Shared Decision-Making**
- ✓ **Inclusive Consultation and Family-Centred Practices**
- ✓ **Community Collaboration and Student Voice**

Sample Initiatives:

- “Your Voice Matters” Poster Contest
- Mental Health & Well-Being Youth Art Museum
- Parent Mental Health & Well-Being Committee
- Parent Engagement Sessions (Newcomer MHL, Impact VI, Summer Guide, DDVC)
- Digital Safety: A Parent’s Roadmap
- Inclusive P045 Policy Consultations
- Anti-Sex Trafficking: Parent Learning Modules
- Monthly GIG Groups: Parent Education & Celebration Events
- Youth Outreach Worker & Social Worker Connection Events
- Parent/Caregiver Curriculum Overviews and Drop-Ins
- MHSA Student Panels (Digital Safety, School Events)
- Student Senate & Student Surveys
- School Councils & Equity Committees
- Community Partner-Led Events (CTYS, Boost, Victim Services, CYC Support)



Roots2Rise Conference

