

Message from the Superintendent and CEO

Dear Students, Parents/Guardians, and Staff,

As we move towards the holiday season and reflect on the past year, I am excited to share an update on mental health services in our division—a cornerstone of our commitment to the well-being and success of every student.

We are thrilled to welcome Jessie Johnson as our new Director of Mental Health Services. Jessie brings a wealth of expertise, energy, and vision to her role, and we are confident that her leadership will bring impactful support and innovation to our division's mental health programs.

This year, we have taken important steps to make mental health resources more equitable and accessible for all students. By redistributing school supports across the division, we are aligning resources with our diverse school communities' unique needs. These changes reflect our focus on ensuring that every child receives the tools they need to thrive academically, socially, and emotionally.

Our investment in mental health services is rooted in our belief that supporting children today lays the foundation for brighter futures. Whether through expanding services, integrating new strategies, or fostering collaboration with families and caregivers, our efforts are driven by a shared vision of student success and wellness.

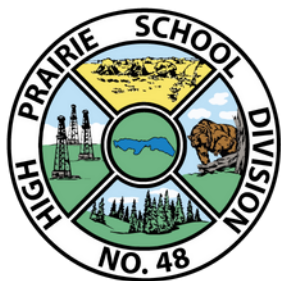
As we look to the future, we are excited about the great work ahead. The challenges are real, but so are the opportunities to make a meaningful difference in the lives of our students. Together, as a community, we will continue to grow, adapt, and prioritize what matters most—the well-being of our children.

Wishing you a restful and rejuvenating holiday season filled with connection and care.

Warm regards,

Murray Marran
Superintendent and CEO





WELLNESS TEAM HOLIDAY NEWSLETTER

High Prairie School Division



HPSD Students, Parents/Guardians, & Staff

As the holiday season approaches, we understand there can be a mix of emotions - joy & excitement, stress & anxiety, as well as many other emotions along the way. It is worth noting that it is okay not to feel “festive” all the time during the holiday season. The pressure to meet expectations, whether they are due to school, social gatherings, or family pressure, can affect a person’s mental health.

We have included some information as well as some activities for you to enjoy throughout the holiday season.

IN THIS EDITION

- Mind Matters
- Winter Break Guide
- Holiday Colouring
- Resource Numbers

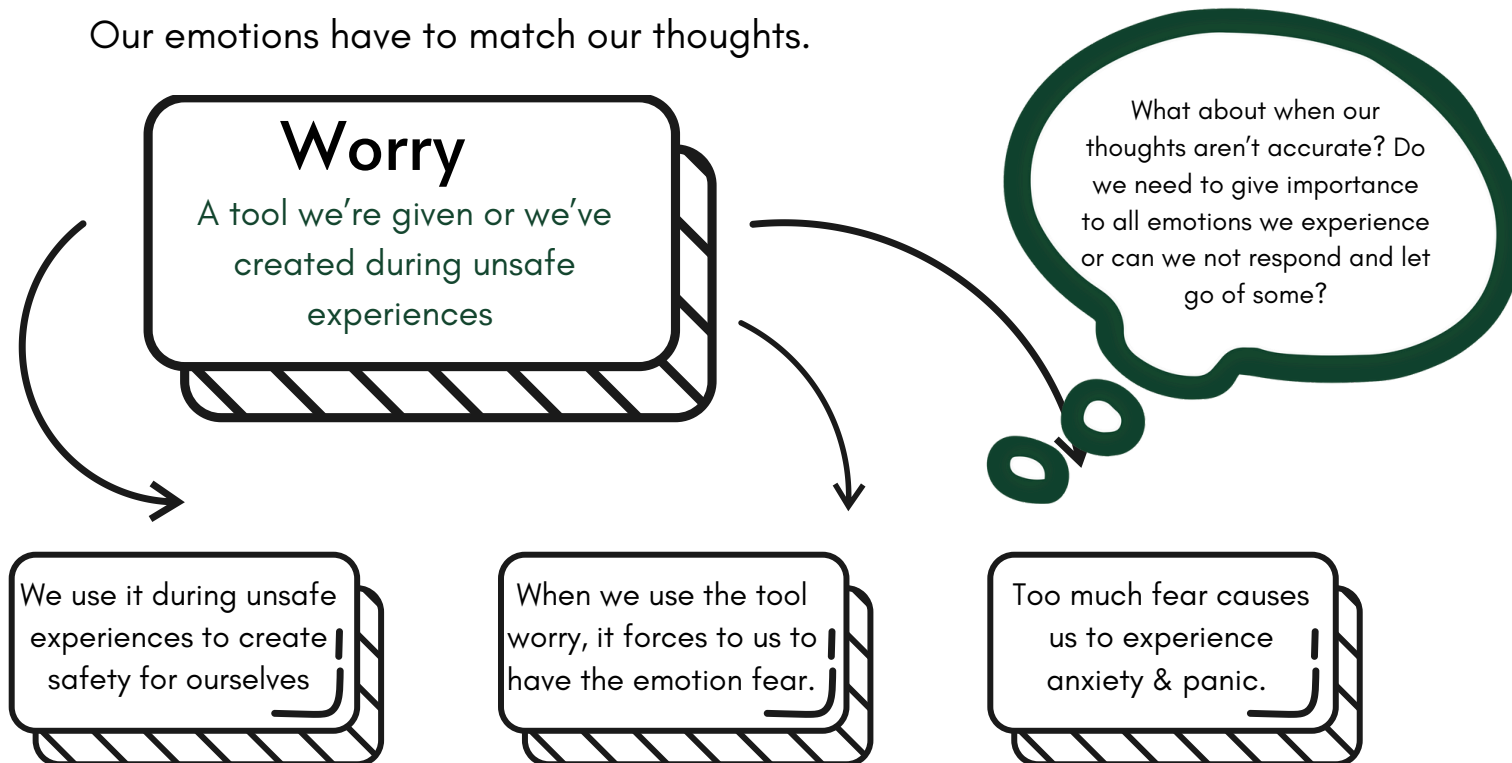
hpsd.ca

Mind Matters: Mental Health Insights for a Stronger Mind

Understanding Worry & Fear: The Connection Between Thoughts & Emotions

As humans we will question our thoughts and wonder if we are thinking accurately or not. Very rarely do we question if our emotions are accurate. Instead, we most often respond as if our emotions are accurate. We are hardwired to have emotions that match our thoughts.

Our emotions have to match our thoughts.



Can we change out the tool worry?

- How do I know the emotion is rooted in truth?
- Is the tool worry helpful to me?
- Is the tool worry hurting me?
- Do I want to use the tool worry?
- Am I ready to let worry go?

IF WE RE-EVALUATE OUR TOOLBOX AND TAKE THE TOOL OF WORRY OUT AND PUT IN THE TOOL OF DEALING WITH IT IF IT HAPPENS, WE ARE NO LONGER FORCED TO LIVE IN FEAR.

Winter Break Guide for Families 2024

Parent/Guardian Mental Health



Caregiving is a tough gig! As much as the winter break brings fun activities and time well spent, it can create additional demands as a caregiver. It can be difficult to carve out time to focus on your mental health amidst the chaos of caregiving, but it's just as important for both you and your children. If you're not sure where to start, check out the bottom of the page for some resources.

Children's Mental Health

Children experience life stressors, fear, and general ups and downs as they navigate the world around them. As a parent, it can be difficult to know when those experiences or emotions become too much for our children. They might not be able to tell you with their words how or what emotions they are experiencing.



Asking the other adults in their life if they've noticed a shift



Are the behaviours I'm concerned about happening more often?



Is this impacting my child's ability to enjoy everyday things?



Are the behaviours I'm concerned about more intense than before?

Dude Johnson (780-523-1291)

In-person available

Call or Text Ages 12+

Jolynn Chalifoux (780-523-0865)

In-person available

Call or Text Ages 12+

Alisha Sabourin (780-995-7011)

Alisha.Sabourin@gmail.com

Virtual Only

Text or Email Ages 12+

Mental Health Supports

***accepting new clients**

**Reach out to your child's
Wellness Coach for other services
in your area**

Winter Break Guide for Families 2024

Regulation Reminder from OT Jeanelle Delorme

School breaks often lead to a change in our routines, which can change our ability to regulate.

Ideas to stay regulated over the holiday season:

- Get moving – a little bit of movement can make everyone feel better
- Dance party
- Outside time (play, go for walk)
- Simon Says
- Chores (get the whole family involved)
- Breathing

Screen Free Ideas:

- Puzzles
- Colouring
- Drawing
- Play Dough
- Building (sticks, blocks, legos etc.)
- Crafts



Breathe in



Hold



Breathe out



Hold a pretend cupcake or a pretend balloon, take a big breath in, and pretend to blow up the balloon or blow the candles out on the cupcake.



Mindful Breathing

Take some time to focus on just breathing! A couple of different ways to try this with your family are using 4-7-8 breathing or the pretend balloon/candle.

Winter Break Guide for Families 2024

Language Ideas from SLP Kristan Nelson

Winter break is a wonderful time to connect with loved ones through activities like holiday events, decorating, and outdoor activities. But did you know these are also perfect opportunities to support your child's speech and language development? No need for flashcards or workbooks! The best time to support a child's speech and language development is when they are doing something they enjoy with the people they love.



Decorating

- Talk about the ornaments as you hang them up
- Where did you get them? What do they look like? What colour are they? Who made them?
- Use new words – branches, sap, needles, hooks, tinsel, garland, or twinkling lights.



Traditions

- Talk about the traditions you have in your family.
- Take time to include your child in these traditions.
- Explain what each tradition means, and why it is important to your family.



Concerts

- Most communities, schools, or churches have holiday concerts for children. Look for one in your area.
- Talk about the things you see on the stage.
- Talk about the songs and instruments you hear.
- Talk about the play or story.
- Ask your child what they think will happen next



Snow

- Children of all ages like to play in the snow. If they dress warmly they can play outside and have lots of fun.
- Go for walks in the snow. Ask about the footprints you see and the footprints you make. Talk about how your footprints are big and your child's are small. Make pictures in the snow with your footprints
- Make snow angels or snowmen. Talk about the parts of the angel and the snowman. Talk about what will happen when the weather gets warmer



Check out this link for more activity ideas as well as speech and language milestones for children: [Parent resources SLP](#)

Holiday Colouring Sheet

Born and raised local artist, Ashley Johansson experiments through a variety of methods, mediums, and styles to create distinctive works of art. From watercolour paintings, beaded earrings, and felted work to epoxy, acrylic, and digital design – her imagination is continuously keeping her hands busy. Ashley's favourite thing about art is the ability it has to provoke feeling, thoughts and inspiration.

Ashley was asked to create a custom holiday colouring sheet for the HPSD Wellness Holiday Newsletter. Please feel free to print copies for your class or for your children at home.



Ashley's art can be found on both Facebook & Instagram @ashleyjohanssonart



Resource Numbers

Name	Contact	Questions to ask yourself
Health Link	Call 811	Do you need health advice?
Mental Health	Intake - 1-888-594-0211 24 Hour -1-877-303-2642	Do you have questions about mental health?
Indigenous Virutal Care Clinic	1-888-342-4822	Are you Indigenous and need access to a doctor?
LGBTQS+	Youth - 1-800-246-7743 General - 1-888-843-4564	Are you seeking an LGBTQ safe support?
Kids Help Phone	Call 1-800-668-6868 Text CONNECT to 686868	Are you a child or youth seeking support?
Native Youth Crisis Line	1-877-209-1266	Are you an indigenous youth needing support?
Addictions	1-866-332-2322	Do you need to talk with someone about addiction concerns?
Food Bank	High Prairie -780-523-5777 Donnelly/Falher - 780-837-2220 Slave Lake - 780-849-3039	Are you facing food insecurity?
Child Abuse Hotline	1-800-387-5437	Are you or another child being abused by another person?
Crisis Suicide Line	Phone or Text - 988	Are you or someone you know experiencing thoughts of suicide?
Sexual Violence	1-866-403-8000	Have you experienced or are concerned about sexual violence?