

# Youth Wellness Champions Program

## Sample student-led activities

Activity and description	Description	Desired outcomes
"Just Breathe"	School Staff Lead introduces and coaches students through a number of activities to promote mindfulness which includes meditation and relaxation techniques.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introduce a culture of mindfulness amongst school staff and student body as a lifestyle strategy for promoting overall wellbeing and coping with the stresses of life.</li> </ul>
"Chill Room" or "Wellness Centre"	Create an area within the school where students can go to feel safe.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Youth will know where and how to access community resources/services in the school.</li> <li>• Youth will have a "safe zone" where they can go to talk or get help.</li> <li>• More youth will engage in student-led activities to promote mental health awareness.</li> <li>• Decrease stigma around mental illness.</li> <li>• Increase mental health awareness and wellness.</li> </ul>
"Wellness Week"	Various activities taking place throughout one week (lunch time) during exams. Activities include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Information session on healthy coping strategies</li> <li>• Dog therapy day</li> <li>• Poetry session</li> <li>• Yoga</li> <li>• Speakers with lived experience</li> <li>• Mental health activity (short activities to take place during first period)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promote mental health awareness, reduce stigma and increase resilience.</li> <li>• Increase number of students connecting with support staff to seek assistance when needed.</li> <li>• Increase number of students accessing the Mental Wellness Centre to find a safe place to de-escalate, feel safe, regroup and access resources.</li> </ul>
"Worriless Wednesday"	No homework or tests assigned on Wednesdays. Could happen weekly, bi-weekly, or monthly.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Decrease stress related to school work</li> <li>• Allow students time to focus on other activities that they enjoy including sports, time with family, video games, etc.</li> </ul>

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“Elephant in the room”	A national anti-stigma campaign. The elephants signify that it is a safe zone to talk about mental wellness issues. Display various elephant posters, paintings, drawings, plush elephants around the school, as well as mental health resources for youth to access (ex: help lines). Do multiple announcements to keep the students guessing the symbolism of the elephant. Reveal the symbolism at the end of the campaign with fun activities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create a stigma-free zone (Inclusiveness).</li> <li>• Make conversations mainstream about mental health.</li> <li>• Share mental health resources available for youth in their community.</li> </ul>
Wall mural	Have students create a mural depicting images and/or words about what mental health means to them.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Decrease the stigma around mental health.</li> <li>• Increase awareness of resources available around mental health and substance misuse.</li> </ul>
Transitioning students’ orientation (grade 9 youth)	Focus is on new grade 9 students entering high school. Provide an orientation for these students on how to advocate for yourself with regards to mental health and wellbeing, academic pathways, etc. Also include information on coping strategies – time and stress management, organizational skills, identify who in the school can help.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure grade 9 students know how to advocate for themselves when entering grade 9 and know how to deal with the potential stress they will experience due to academic and social issues that may arise.</li> <li>• Students become advocates for themselves and their communities, and have a better understanding of how to ensure positive mental health and wellbeing.</li> </ul>
Health Symposium	Various agencies that provide mental health and addictions services are invited to display a booth at the school with resources and handouts they can distribute to students. You can provide gifts and incentives such as pens, notebooks or even a prize draw to engage students.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Deliver a one day mental health and addictions symposium to increase youths’ and school staffs’ awareness on how youth can access services.</li> <li>• Educate youth and school staff on issues that may be affecting youth in the area.</li> <li>• Encourage mental health discussion.</li> </ul>

Updated February 2025