



**SUDBURY  
CATHOLIC  
SCHOOLS**

**2024-2027**

# **Mental Health & Addictions Strategy**

**Pursuing Well-Being for ALL**

# The Continuum of Mental Health

## Overview Statement:

We all have mental health and **good** mental health is a fundamental human entitlement.

Good mental health is crucial for overall well-being. It enables us to experience a range of emotions in a balanced way, maintain clarity of thought, make rational decisions, solve problems effectively, engage in behaviors that are adaptive and constructive, enhance relationships and achieve personal goals.

Good mental health doesn't mean being happy all the time or never feeling negative emotions. It means having the resilience and coping skills to handle life's ups and downs in a healthy way.

Understanding mental health as a continuum helps us appreciate its dynamic nature. It reminds us that experiencing challenges with mental health is a common part of the human experience and that seeking support and practicing self-care are crucial aspects of maintaining well-being. By acknowledging these fluctuations and embracing the diversity of experiences related to mental health, we can promote a more compassionate and supportive environment for ourselves and others.

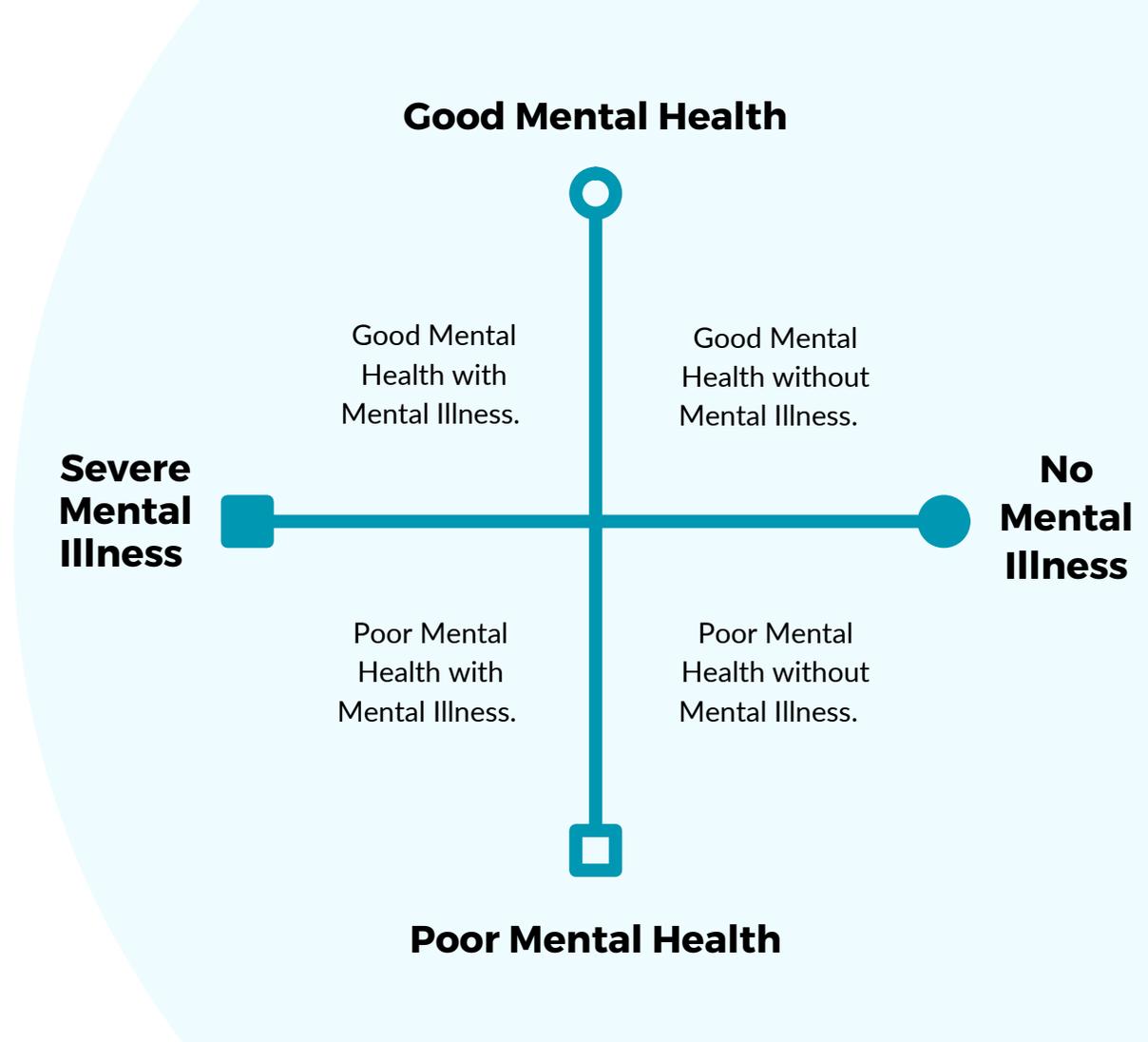


# The Dual Continuum:

## Mental Health & Mental Illness

Mental health and mental illness are distinct yet interconnected concepts, forming a dual continuum. For example, a person can have poor mental health without mental illness or poor mental health with mental illness. Someone with a diagnosed mental illness can still feel mentally well and have good mental health. Similarly, someone without a diagnosed mental illness can have poor mental health and need help.

If a person has what they need to promote wellbeing and/or manage their illness, they can feel mentally well and experience a good quality of life. That's why getting treatment and support is essential.



## Defining Good Mental Health

**Good mental health during childhood** involves achieving both developmental and emotional milestones, acquiring healthy social competencies, and mastering coping strategies. Mentally healthy children experience a high quality of life and exhibit effective functioning within their families, schools, and communities.

## Mental Health

**Mental health** is the state of an individual's psychological and emotional well-being. It is a necessary resource for living a healthy life and a main factor in overall health. It does not mean the same thing as mental illness. However, poor mental health can lead to mental and physical illness.

## Mental Illness

**Mental illness** is defined as alterations in thinking, mood or behaviour associated with significant distress and impaired functioning in one or more areas such as school, work, social or family interactions or the ability to live independently.

## School-Based Brief Intervention

**School-Based Brief Intervention** is an approach to mental health services, delivered in schools that is systematic, brief, and evidence-informed for students experiencing mild to moderate mental health concerns. It can be provided to individuals or in small groups.

## Intensive Services

**Intensive Services** are provided by community-based mental health agencies or hospitals for students with the most intense and complex mental health challenges.

## Addiction

**Addiction** is a complex process where problematic patterns of substance use or behaviours can interfere with a person's life. Addiction can be broadly defined as a condition that leads to a compulsive engagement with a stimuli, despite negative consequences. This can lead to physical and/or psychological dependence. Addictions can be either substance related (such as the problematic use of alcohol or drugs) or process-related, also known as behavioural addictions (such as gambling or internet addiction). Both can disrupt an individual's ability to maintain a healthy life.

## Culturally Responsive

**Culturally Responsive** is an approach to mental health learning, supports and services that considers students' intersecting social and cultural identities. This approach recognizes that students may respond differently to mental health learning, supports and services and that these differences may be connected to a student's background, language, family structure, and social or cultural identities. This approach also emphasizes that educators and school leaders reflect on their own biases and analyze how their own identities and experiences affect how they view, understand, and interact with all students.

## Concurrent Disorders

**Concurrent Disorders** are when mental health issues and substance abuse occur together. Mental health issues and substance abuse problems occur on a continuum, and a concurrent disorder emerges when they intersect at any point. For example, a person might use alcohol to cope with feelings of anxiety or use drugs to cope with symptoms of Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder.

## Trauma-Informed Practice

**Trauma-Informed Practice** recognizes the signs and symptoms of trauma, realizes the extensive impact of traumatic stress on individuals and communities, responds by integrating knowledge of trauma into the program or service, and actively resists the re-traumatization of clients and staff.

## Ontario's Vision for Student Mental Health



Ontario's vision is that "Students have the knowledge and skills to understand and support their mental health and have access to high quality mental health and addiction services that provide appropriate supports for their diverse needs and experiences when and where they need them across the provincial mental health continuum of care".

### Provincial Mental Health & Addictions

***Ministry of Health*** has the provincial policy mandate for the overall mental health and addictions system. In March 2020, the ministry released Roadmap to Wellness, Ontario's mental health and addictions strategy. The Mental Health and Addictions Centre of Excellence at Ontario Health is responsible for implementing Roadmap to Wellness with guidance and funding from the Ministry of Health. The ministry also provides strategic program management and fiscal oversight of community-based child and youth mental health programs and services under the authority of the Child, Youth and Family Services Act, 2017. **The Ministry of Health collaborates with the Ministry of Education to support a more integrated system of mental health care for students.**

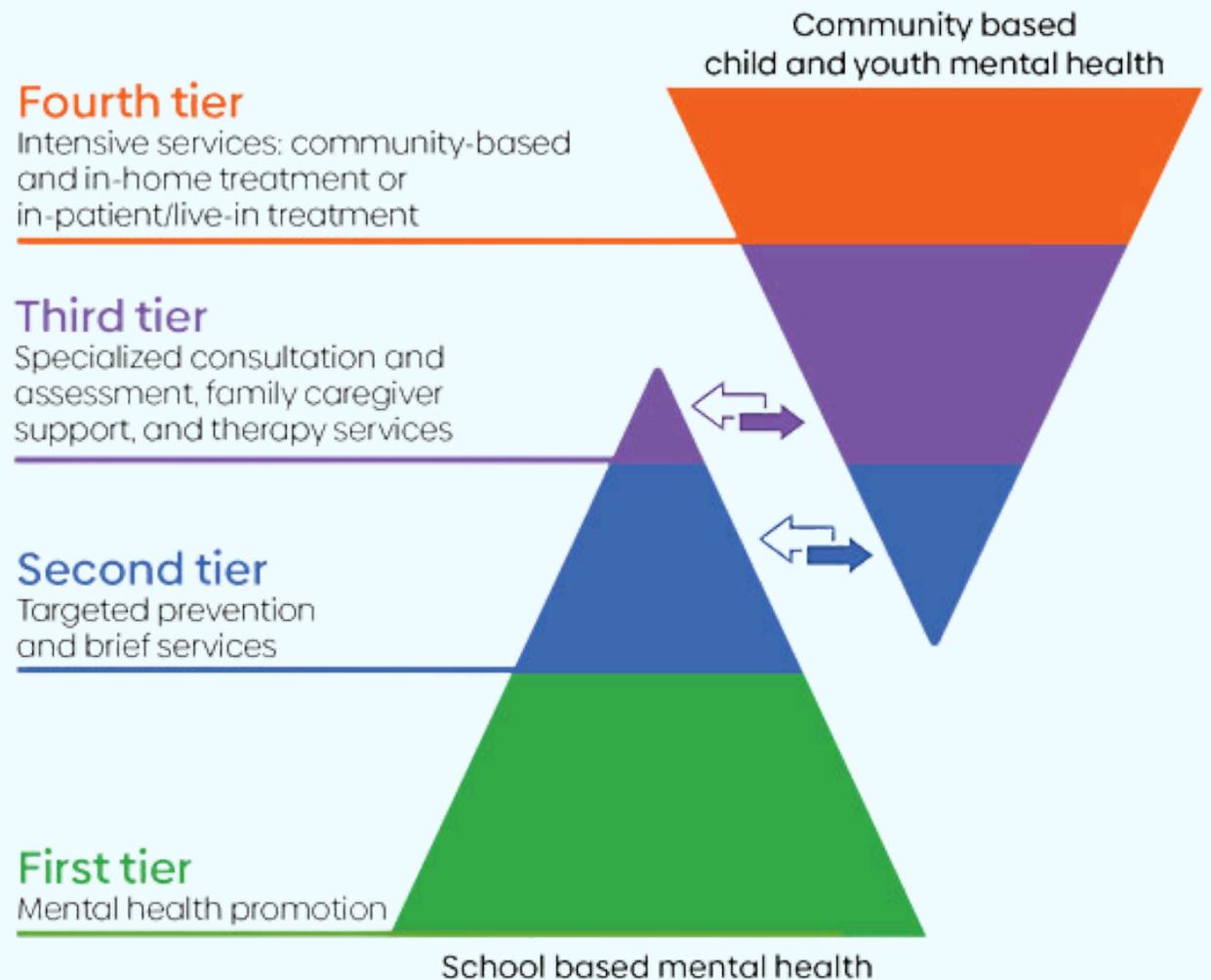
***Ministry of Education (Well-Being Branch)*** provides **guidance, funding, and implementation support to school boards to help promote student mental health.** The ministry also works with other partner ministries such as the Ministry of Health to support a systems approach to children's mental health and to make the best possible use of resources across the continuum of mental health care.



# Multi-Tiered System of Support Model for Children & Youth

The education and the community mental health sectors use this multi-tiered system of support model to depict and understand the continuum of supports available for children and youth. The tiered models are overlaid as part of a **coordinated support system**, and young people can move between them.

## Figure 1 Integrated Tiered System of Care



MIND  
FULLNESS

HELP

EMOTION

FAITH

CARE

WELL-BEING

MENTAL  
HEALTH

HELP

SUPPORT

YOUTH

## Tier 1: The first level is designed to be good for all.



This is the foundational everyday work that educators and school staff do within and beyond the curriculum to welcome and include every student, to understand them, to build knowledge of mental health, to promote mentally healthy habits, and to partner with families, students, other staff, and community to create a supportive environment. **Most of the mental health work in schools is at this level.**

## Tier 2: The second level is necessary for some.



Some students will need additional support. Educators and school staff can help by reinforcing skills and working to remove barriers to learning. **Regulated school mental health professionals and others with specialized skills provide intervention** services, like school-based, evidence-informed, brief intervention protocols.

## Tier 3: The third level is essential for few.



Small numbers of students will require more intensive support beyond what is available in schools. School mental health professionals **help students to access appropriate community or health services and coordinate the ongoing care students need while at school**. In some cases, regulated school mental health professionals will provide **intensive assessment and therapeutic services** when students cannot or will not access outside support or will manage crisis events as they arise.

## Most of the mental health supports in schools take place at Tiers 1 and 2,

which includes mental health promotion, prevention, and early intervention. A small number of students receive Tier 3 mental health services in schools in cases where they cannot or will not be able to access outside supports, and to manage crisis events as they arise.

**Community-based** child and youth organizations **prioritize clinical supports at Tiers 3 and 4**, including intensive services. Community-based agencies also offer Tier 2 services, often as a stepped service approach with referrals made to a range of other services including Tier 3 and 4 services, as needed. Community-based child and youth mental health and addictions organizations offer services in the **evenings and on weekends throughout the year**. Service is provided to children and young people, with parents or caregivers often actively participating in the therapeutic process.

The overlap in Tiers 2 and 3 provides the opportunity for school-based and community-based supports in a particular school board or service area to **come together – along with the child or young person and their family – to determine the best type and setting to provide this support.**



# The SCDSB Vision

## for Mental Health and Addictions Services

The Sudbury Catholic District School Board remains genuinely committed to cultivating, supporting, and sustaining a culture of good mental health and wellbeing where every student can thrive academically and personally.

### Our Mission

Our Mission is to realize each student's potential within our inclusive Catholic learning community by nurturing and developing their mind, body, and spirit.

### Our Values

Modeling Jesus in the world through:  
Faith | Respect | Community | Innovation | Learning

### Our Guiding Principles

- Assisting students to achieve success and well-being involves nurturing a harmonious balance of mind, body, and spirit.
- Fostering a connection between school, home, church, and community creates a collaborative approach to supporting well-being.
- Harnessing the power of student voice guides our efforts to effectively support and empower them.
- Empowering and teaching caring adults how to nurture the lives of students is essential for fostering their growth and well-being.
- Implementing consistent, ongoing, and evidence-based initiatives is crucial for enhancing the mental health and wellbeing of students over time.



Caring for the  
**Mind, Body** and  
**Spirit** of Our  
Students

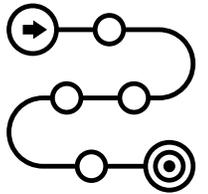


# SCDSB Mental Health & Addictions Priorities 2024-2027

**1** Enhance mental health literacy in the SCDSB community (students, families, and staff).



**2** Enhance mental health service delivery at SCDSB through timely access to effective, evidence-based, inclusive, and culturally responsive school mental health services.



**3** Ensure SCDSB students, families and staff are aware of how to access services both within the school and in the community and empower students to prioritize their mental health and wellbeing.



**4** Work collaboratively and effectively within community-based system of care to successfully meet the needs of students and families.



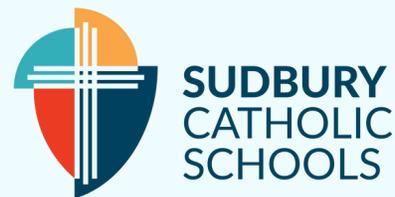


## Our Organizational Conditions

Our School Board is responsible for several activities including but not limited to administering the funding received from the province for our schools, hiring teachers and other staff, supervising the operation of schools and their teaching programs, and ensuring schools operate in accordance with the Education Act and its regulations.

## The Ministry of Education - Requirements for School Boards (PPM 169)

1. Three-Year Mental Health and Addictions Strategy & One-Year Action Plan
2. Joint Local Planning with Community-based Child & Youth Mental Health Providers
3. Multi-Tiered System of Supports
4. Consistent Use of Evidence-informed Brief Interventions & Standardized Measurement
5. Suicide Prevention, Intervention and Postvention Protocols
6. Virtual Care Delivery
7. Enhanced Educator and Staff Mental Health Literacy
8. Mandatory Mental Health Literacy Learning for Students
9. Family Mental Health Literacy and Awareness
10. Social-Emotional Learning
11. Mental Health Absences



## Supervisory Officer

Our Supervisory Officer with Responsibility for Mental Health provides overall strategic direction in student mental health and ensures this work is communicated and aligned throughout the school board. System and school leaders establish the conditions for quality, consistency, and sustainability in school mental health.

## Manager of Mental Health Services

Our Manager of Mental Health & Addictions Services provides leadership within the school board for student mental health, collaborates with school board staff and community mental health partners to promote a proactive, integrated system of care, and is accountable for developing, implementing, and monitoring the school board's three-year mental health and addictions strategy, one-year action plan, and the collection, utilization and reporting of information related to student mental health.

## Mental Health Team

Our Mental Health Team is comprised of 10 Regulated Professionals (includes 1 Manager of Mental Health & Addictions Services RSW + 1 Clinical Coordinator RSW + 5 clinical RSWs + 3 clinical RPs) and 4 Mental Health Support Staff (CYWs).



# Our Team Regulated Professionals

Our Regulated Professionals (social workers / psychotherapists) are positioned in our elementary and secondary schools to **support students with mild to moderate mental health concerns and provide brief evidence-informed early interventions.** For students with more intensive mental health concerns, regulated school mental health professionals will refer students to community-based child and youth mental health services.



## Specific Duties of Regulated Professionals:



Supporting school staff via consultation related to accommodating the school environment and providing tailored scaffolded supports to help students with mental health concerns.



Providing professional learning and coaching for school staff.



Providing school-based mental health promotion, prevention, and early intervention services (individual or small group), using evidence-informed protocols and identity-affirming and culturally responsive approaches.



Providing triage, referral, and bridging support to/from and through community services with consent and in collaboration with the student, family, and school team.



Providing crisis response for the student, in collaboration with family, community and health system partners, as situations require.



Providing system feedback to improve services over time and to enhance the service experience.

# Our Team Non-Regulated Support Staff (CYW's)

Our Non-Regulated Support Staff (CYW's) are positioned in our elementary schools to **support all students** in the **classroom** or in **small groups** with evidence-informed mental health literacy and universal mental health promotion activities.



## Specific Duties of Non-Regulated Support Staff:



Supporting school staff via consultation related to accommodating the school environment.



Providing professional learning and coaching for school staff.



Providing school-based mental health promotion (universal classrooms, mental health initiatives and small SEL groups) using evidence-informed protocols and identity-affirming and culturally responsive approaches.



Providing referral to community services with consent and in collaboration with the student, family, and school team.



Providing system feedback to improve services over time and to enhance the service experience.

# Our Team School Staff



Our School staff: (administrators, teacher, learning resource teacher, child and youth worker, early childhood educator, Indigenous grad coach, Indigenous support workers, educational assistant, faith animator/chaplaincy lead, and others).

Educators are well-positioned to **teach all students about mental health** and there are mental health related expectations included in various elementary and secondary Curricula. Additionally, educators are **at the center of creating mentally healthy, and welcoming classroom environments, noticing students about whom they may have a concern and knowing how to respond** (via the pathways available for supports in the school).

Guidance teacher-counsellors **support student well-being** and **make connections to supports** for student mental health.



## Specific MH Related Duties of School Staff:



Behave as Caring Adults.



Provide a mentally healthy school and classroom environment.



Notice when students are struggling.



Compassionately communicate and collaborate with the student and family regarding concerns.



Bring their concerns about the student to the established internal pathway for referral.



Review recommendations re: accommodations for the student.



Accommodate the learning plan and school environment to support the student's needs.



Provide non-judgmental support to the student and integration when needed.



Observe, document, and describe specific student behaviour to support referral, assessment, or treatment process.



Maintain ongoing communication to support the treatment plan.



Provide system feedback to improve services over time and to enhance the service experience.



# Students

## Specific Duties of Students:

- ✓ Communicate or demonstrate a need for help and/or show openness to exploring the possibility of receiving services/treatment.
- ✓ Engage in service and contribute to their own self-care in ways that feel safe.
- ✓ Provide age-appropriate background information, ideas, and input to develop their service plan.
- ✓ Provide feedback to improve services and enhance the service experience over time.



# Parents & Caregivers

## Specific Duties of Parents & Caregivers:

- ✓ Show awareness of mental health concerns.
- ✓ Offer support to the child or young person.
- ✓ Connect with the school and/or community-based services to obtain required supports.
- ✓ Provide background information, ideas, and input into the development of the service plan.
- ✓ Engage in service when and to the extent that it is appropriate.
- ✓ Provide feedback to improve services and enhance the service experience over time.



## Mental Health & Addictions Nurses

**Mental Health and Addictions Nurses** in Schools are employees of Ontario Health at Home (formerly Home and Community Care Support Services) who provide early intervention, system navigation, and therapeutic strategies that address specific mental health and addiction needs for students. The program consists of specialized nurses working in the community and in schools to assist students who have various mental health challenges.

## Youth Wellness Hubs

**Youth Wellness Hubs** offer easily accessible services for youth aged 12-25 and their families located all in one convenient, welcoming place designed with youth, for youth. They offer convenient and fast access to Integrated Youth Services (IYS) including mental health services, support for substance use concerns, primary health care, social services, housing, employment and more. Services are free and range from low to high intensity supports including rapid walk-in services, booked appointments and virtual services.

## Community-based Child and Youth Mental Health Agencies

**Community-based Child and Youth Mental Health Agencies (Compass and HSN)** deliver a range of mental health services including prevention, counselling, therapy (both intensive and specialized) to children and youth up to the age of 18, and their families.

## Public Health Units

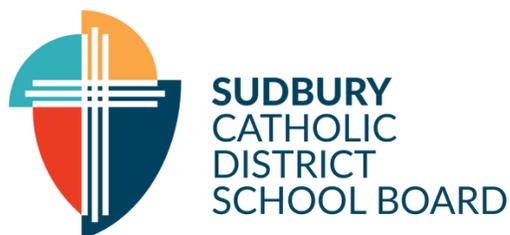
**Public Health Units (Public Health Sudbury & Districts)** offer healthy living programs and disease prevention information and develop and implement public health interventions using a comprehensive health promotion approach to improve the health of school-aged children and youth.



# Sudbury Catholic District School Board

## Mental Health & Addictions Leadership Team

Joanne Benard, Director of Education  
Erica Raymond, Superintendent of Education  
Louise Franklin, Superintendent of Education  
Laurie Milling, Manager of Mental Health Services  
Christine McCracken, Elementary Principal  
Lori Holden, Secondary Vice Principal



The Mental Health Leadership Team develops a yearly Action Plan to bring our priorities to life:

**SCDSB Yearly Action Plan**



**Policy & Program Memorandum 169**