

# Mental Health and Well-Being Belongs to Us

## *Put it All Together: Perseverance, Grit, Self-Regulation and Executive Functioning & You Have a Recipe for... Well-Being*



MARCH 2016

Issue #17

### **Grit: Passion and Perseverance for Long Term Goals**

Dr. Michael Unger, a leading researcher on resilience, reports that nurture trumps nature and that grit and perseverance can be taught. He notes that the more troubled an individual, the more our efforts to help count. It takes a family, a community and a school to nurture resilience. He also found that adaptive and maladaptive behaviours can both be successful coping strategies depending on the context in which they are used. Reflecting on the last statement, there are many ways that students are "gritty" and persevere. Dr. Ungar (2014) reminds us that development of resilience and grit need to be culturally meaningful. He reminds us that individuals need to be able to navigate their way to multiple resources and be able to negotiate for resources they need.

School communities have a great deal to offer in supporting students find and access multiple resources, developing resilience and supporting development of grit and perseverance through caring and responsive school environments. Dr. Ungar poses these four important messages from home and school to support risk-taking, responsibility-seeking and supporting gritty youth: You Belong! You're Trustworthy! You're Responsible! You're Capable!

Dr. Angela Lee Duckworth has received a great deal of attention for her studies of grit. Many people agree with Duckworth that grit is a strong predictor of success – that doing well in life depends on much more than your talent, IQ or your ability to learn quickly. "Gritty" individuals are resilient and persistent, and overrepresented among highly accomplished scientists, novelists, artists and entrepreneurs.

Duckworth's research suggests that possessing a growth mindset goes a long way toward building grit. A growth mindset seems to contribute to the tendency to sustain effort toward and commitment to goals. There appears to be a strong relationship between grit and an "optimistic explanatory style." Optimists tend to attribute good events to global and stable causes and bad events to temporary and specific causes. They also rate themselves higher in both grit and life satisfaction, and those two qualities have been shown to predict success.

### **Grit in the Classroom**

Many educators and mental health professionals see grit as ideally suited for the education sector and indeed, the concept has been applied and promoted in several classrooms. The messaging that achievement is more about effort, persistence and bouncing back from failure rather than IQ or background understandably resonates loudly. Certainly, Michael Unger promotes a positive application of grit that aligns with mental health strategies. However, research into how to integrate, cultivate and measure grit in school settings is still in the very early stages and broad application may be premature. Of particular concern are applications that judge, compare or evaluate students on their levels of grit, or challenge students to prove their grit. We need to consider the impact of viewing students through this "gritty" lens when there are circumstances or life experiences that prevent a primary focus on achievement and may even impair cognitive functioning (e.g., trauma). Most importantly, we need to maintain perspective and understand that grit is not the only lens or sometimes the right lens in which to view achievement, success or failure. Research tells us that sometimes walking away from a goal rather than pushing ourselves to the limit is the healthier choice.

The best way to get to the "nitty gritty" on grit in education is to learn about it not only within the context of "achievement", but within the context of positive psychology and student mental health and well-being. Read about grit and the research behind it and watch the "Ted Talks" videos. Get informed about what proponents and detractors have

to say about grit in education and consider all perspectives. Learn about positive psychology by reviewing writings and research on strength focused approaches, self-compassion, mindfulness, pathways to resilience and the role of the human spirit and meaning in both goal achievement and facing adversity.

*(Adapted from School Mental Health Assist February 2016 Personal Resiliency Newsletter)*

#### **Additional Resources:**

- How Children Succeed: Grit, Curiosity, and the Hidden Power of Character by Paul Tough
- Mindset by Carol Dweck
- Man's Search for Meaning by Victor Frankle Critical Opinions on Grit in Education
- A Skeptical Look at the Latest Educational Fad, By Alfie Kohn <http://www.alfiekohn.org/article/downside-grit/?print=pdf>
- Ted Talks: [http://www.ted.com/talks/angela\\_lee\\_duckworth\\_the\\_key\\_to\\_success\\_grit.html](http://www.ted.com/talks/angela_lee_duckworth_the_key_to_success_grit.html) (6 mins.)
- <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qaeFnxSfSC4> (18 mins.)
- The Atlantic "When Grit Isn't Enough" <http://www.theatlantic.com/education/archive/2015/12/when-grit-isnt-enough/418269/>

## 4-7-8 Breathing at Roden Public School

This year at Roden P.S., students in Grades 4 and 6 are being taught the 4-7-8 meditative breathing technique by Dr. Andrea Adams, Psychological Services, Area B, and Ilana Lockwood, OISE/UT Practicum Student. Meditative breathing has long been shown, through research, to help people to focus attention, release tension, dispel anxiety, improve self-regulation skills, and build resilience to stress.

Students are told that 4-7-8 breathing is a “super quick” and easy way to help them to relax and handle stress and be in charge of their own bodies. Also, students are told why this breathing technique is so helpful. They are then shown a video demonstrating the technique, the technique is demonstrated in class for the students, and finally, everyone practices the 4-7-8 breathing technique together. The participating teachers have happily agreed to practice this technique with their students at least twice a day.

So, just what is so important about breathing? The answer is that when you are worried or stressed about something, the worry and stress change how you breathe. You take smaller breaths and the small breaths result in your body getting less oxygen—and we know that oxygen is very important for keeping your body healthy. 4-7-8 breathing helps change this stressed and oxygen-deprived state! Taking deep breaths gets more oxygen into your body and helps spread that oxygen all over your body. 4-7-8 breathing also sends a message to your brain to turn on the part of your nervous system that calms you down. This means that your heart beats slower, your mind gets clearer, and you feel much better.

Students are told that the great thing about 4-7-8 breathing is that it’s easy to learn and fast to do and you can do it anytime you want. You can use it when you’re feeling jittery or worried or upset. Also, 4-7-8 breathing can help you focus in class, and fall asleep at night. You can even do it when you’re feeling fine! It’s good to practice 4-7-8 breathing every day, and this way, when you need to reduce stress, you have a great technique that you will more easily remember to use.

(Dr. Andrea Adams, Psychological Services, Area B)

### 4-7-8 Breathing

A relaxation technique



A guide for students, parents, and teachers

#### What is 4-7-8 breathing?

When you are **worried or stressed** about something, it affects how you breathe. You take **smaller breaths**, which means you get **less oxygen**.

4-7-8 breathing helps change that!

Taking deep breaths gets **more oxygen** into your body and helps **spread that oxygen all over your body**.

4-7-8 breathing also sends a message to your brain to **turn on the part of your nervous system that calms you down**.



#### Who can do it?

Anyone!

- It's **easy**.
- It can be done **anywhere**.
- It's **fast**.
- It doesn't require any equipment.



#### When can I use it?

When something upsetting happens – before you react.  
When you feel tense or worried.  
When you can't fall asleep.  
When you can't focus.

Even when you're feeling fine. It's good to practice 4-7-8 breathing every day!

#### How does it work?

To get ready...  
Put the tip of your tongue against the top of your mouth, just behind your top front teeth.

Breathe out through your mouth, making a whoosh sound.

Now...

1. Close your mouth and breathe in quietly through your nose for a count of **four**.
2. Hold your breath for a count of **seven**.
3. Breathe out completely through your mouth, making a whoosh sound, for a count of **eight**.



This is one breath. Now inhale again and repeat the cycle three more times for a total of **four breaths**.



#### How often should I do it?

Do at **least two sets** of 4-7-8 breathing **every day**.

You can do as many sets as you want, but **do not do more than four breaths at one time** for the first month.

After a month of practice, you can work your way up to sets of **eight breaths**.

#### What are the benefits?

- Slows heart rate
- Lowers blood pressure
- Increases oxygen circulation
- Removes toxins from your system
- Clears your mind
- Helps manage stress



For more information, go to [www.drweil.com](http://www.drweil.com).

Pamphlet prepared by Dr. Andrea Adams, Psychologist – Area B  
Ilana Lockwood, OISE/University of Toronto

## Executive Functioning - Understanding Emotional Regulation

Emotional regulation is the ability to inhibit inappropriate behavior related to strong negative or positive emotion. The ability to manage emotions and control impulses is central to learning, developing good social relationships, and even keeping a job. Emotional dysregulation is the inability to effectively moderate strong negative emotions or turn them into a positive mood. Emotionally dysregulated children may be quick to anger, become overly excited, or feel really sad or anxious. Research points to a connection between executive functioning deficits and mental health issues. Problems managing feelings may lead to poor academic performance, disturbed sleep, fatigue, trouble concentrating, headaches or stomach problems, social withdrawal, or conflicts and fighting. Happily, emotional regulation skills can be learned and developed. Some psychology staff are teaching workshops for teachers about emotional regulation. One particular model of workshop focuses on understanding emotional regulation difficulties in both children and adults. Participants are introduced to evidence-based approaches to help students develop basic emotional regulation skills, both in and outside the classroom. Workshop topics include: the origin of mood disorders and emotional regulation difficulties in childhood; identifying and changing thinking-patterns; strategies to help students calm down; the interplay between thoughts, emotions and actions in teachers and students; how to be a role-model for students; motivation building; self-care strategies; and how to maintain a healthy life-work balance. Homework is provided so that teachers can reflect on the topics discussed and practice the skills. Teachers' feedback has been very positive.

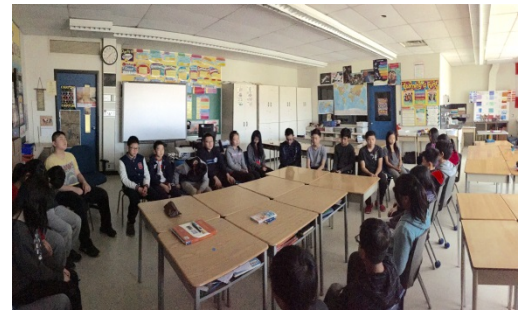
(By: Psychology Staff – Area B)

## The Practice of Mindfulness at Kennedy Public School

To be mindful is to be able to live in the present moment without judgment, ignoring external distractions and managing to avoid the stresses of everyday life. Studies in both medicine and neuroscience show that mindfulness is an essential life skill that enables us to maintain a healthy mind and body. Children are inclined to be more mindful because they live in the present moment and don't tend to preoccupy themselves with the past or the future. Mindfulness helps to protect their developing brain from the negative effects of stress and distorted self-perceptions. However, more and more, parents and educators are discovering that children seem to suffer from low self-esteem, insecurities and stress due to fatigue, distraction and restless, all of which seem to stem from leading hurried lives and busy schedules. By practicing mindfulness, children can learn to pause during their busy day and bring non-judgmental attention to their present state of being.

At Kennedy P.S., our goal is to provide students with strategies that help deal with stress and anxiety. We are intentionally creating a space where students learn not to judge their thoughts and feelings as good or bad, but simply to notice them and then to let them go. Twice a week at the beginning of the school day, staff and students engage in a *'Mindful Moment'*, to help create a positive state of awareness of their own present state. The practice sets the tone for the remainder of the school day, providing students the time and space to be self-aware, and to be in the present moment as they begin their day and prepare for their learning. Initially, *'Mindful Moment'* involved having students listen to the diminishing sound of a chime. With further practice, at the start of each *'Mindful Moment'*, students are now invited to close their eyes or simply to lower them depending on their comfort level, and to sit comfortably either at their desk or on the carpet. As we continue to practice the morning *'Mindful Moment'*, everyone is encouraged to focus attention further inward by noting the feeling of the breath as it passes through our nose, and noticing the thoughts and feelings that occur in that moment.

As a result of implementing this school wide initiative, our school community is starting to understand the benefits of bringing awareness to the present. Students have begun to adapt this approach to buffer stress, and to cultivate greater awareness of self and of others. Practicing Mindfulness as an essential skill, has allowed our students to attend to the present and engage fully in classroom learning experiences. With each repeated practice, students become more and more attuned with their minds and bodies as they note the way they feel, think, then use their breath to manage stress and reduce feelings of anxiety.



Moving forward, our practice will extend to doing a full *'Body Scan'*. This time, students will tune in even further to bring awareness to bodies, with a focus on our breath, heartbeats, tensions and how to refocus our wondering mind using our breath as an anchor. Eventually, our goal is to have teachers incorporate some of the strategies in their daily planning and for students to apply them in independent practice whenever they feel anxious (i.e. prior to test taking, oral presentations, etc.)

Using the full *Body Scan* will help students to self-regulate and manage their emotions and anxiety which will provide them with greater opportunity to focus on their learning. We strongly believe in the positive effects that the *'Mindful Moment'* practice has had on our students as it pays attention to the areas of the brain that assist young children whose nervous systems and brains are still developing, and are even more sensitive to the negative effects of stress.

At Kennedy P.S. students are continuing to learn more about themselves with the repeated and consistent practice of *'Mindful Moment'*. Through discussions with our students, some have commented that they had no idea that they weren't able to even sit still, that they were continually moving some part of their body, until they began to practice mindfulness. Others have stated that they find the practice helps to calm their minds and that they are beginning to use *'Mindful Moments'* at other times during the school day prior to taking a test, or just before bed time to help them go to sleep. Although the practice of Mindfulness is relatively new at our school, as teachers we are beginning to observe the benefits of mindfulness and how it can serve as an interior resource for children to use as they grow into adolescence and beyond.

(By: Rhonda Cohen-Pierobon, Principal at Kennedy Public School)

## Feedership Leadership

On Tuesday March 8th we were invited to Vaughan Road Academy to attend a Mental Health Workshop. We really appreciated the effort put into the day by the high school mentors and adults who organized the event. We learned a variety of skills, concepts and ideas to bring back to our school. We really enjoyed the glitter jar and it has been the talk of our classroom since we brought it back with us. We are looking forward to implementing a variety of projects in our school including the gratitude tree and "speed friending". We were inspired by the guest speaker, Asante Haughton and through him we learned that talking about Mental Wellness is not only important, but necessary. In conclusion, thank you very much for offering this activity to us. We certainly learned a lot and are inspired to do more at our school to help people manage their Mental Health. (*Read all about it on the next page*)

(By: Brooke and Lana, Grade 8 students at Dublin Heights Elementary and Middle School)

## Developing Leadership Skills Working with our Feeder Schools

On Tuesday March 8th, 2016, three high schools from WR3, Vaughan Road Academy, John Polanyi CI, and William Lyon Mackenzie CI, hosted the very first TDSB Feedership Leadership event, addressing mental health and well-being with feeder middle schools in the area. The event helped foster relations between high schools and their feeder middle schools, while also bringing mental health and well-being awareness to the middle school students. The event was led by the three high schools to help develop leadership and public speaking skills in the high school students, but also to make the event as interactive, interesting and fun for the middle school students, and to build relationships between the two panels.

Preparations for the Feedership Leadership event started one month before the day, allowing time for the high school students to learn the material themselves, to plan and prepare for the event, and to make connections and form friendships. This training was co-facilitated by the Mental Health & Well-Being System Support Social Workers and our community partner Toronto Public Health. We began by seeing how mental health and well-being was taught to high school students, and then we identified how best to present this information to younger students, as well as, which topics we thought would be the most beneficial to speak on. After this, the high school students began to plan and prepare our presentations that mainly focused on the differences between mental health and mental illness, as well as, identifying and addressing stigma.

We welcomed the eight feeder middle schools to the Feedership Leadership event at Vaughan Road Academy at 9:30am and the day lasted until 2:30pm with much success. The morning segment of the event was mainly based around the high school students teaching the middle school students about mental health and well-being through an informative and entertaining PowerPoint, with breaks and activities worked in throughout. The physical activity break, led by John Polanyi CI, encouraged students to stay active and demonstrated the important link between physical and mental wellness. The Airplane Game, led by Vaughan Road Academy, was meant to demonstrate how stigma can influence our lives in an interactive way. William Lyon Mackenzie CI led an activity demonstrating the difference between mental illness and mental health, by giving the students various scenarios and asking them to place the scenario in quadrants displaying combinations of good mental health, bad mental health, mental illness, and no mental illness.



Student Wellness Leaders from William Lyon Mackenzie C.I., John Polyani C.I. & Vaughn Road Academy facilitate a mental health & well-being day for Gr. 6-8 students in their FOS.

After our pizza lunch break, the three high schools led activities with the middle school students, to teach them more interactive ways to learn about mental well-being as well as, giving them ideas of how they could bring these lessons back to their own schools. John Polanyi CI created Gratitude Trees with each middle school, to remind them of all the things in their lives that they can be thankful for and that can help improve their own mental health. Vaughan Road academy created Glitter Jars with the middle schools, which act as both a demonstration of your mind when you do a mindfulness exercise, while being a mindfulness exercise in itself. Lastly, William Lyon Mackenzie CI led a Yoga and progressive relaxation session with the middle schools, showing how you can engage in mindfulness exercises through physical means. At the very end of the day, the middle schools developed action plans for how they could bring mental health and well-being awareness and activities back to their individual schools. In the plans the middle schools students were encouraged to reach out to their feeder high schools to help broaden the relationship between feeder schools and their high schools, and to give them more resources moving forward with their initiatives. To enhance this exciting initiative Liaison Nurses from Toronto Public Health are assigned to each school to help support and develop the initiative in each of the schools. They will offer their expertise, knowledge and resources to help customize the initiative for each school's particular needs.

In the end, the Feedership Leadership event was highly successful for both the middle school students and the high school students. It was an incredibly fulfilling initiative to be a part of, inspiring a new understanding of mental health and well-being, improving leadership skills, and having a lot of fun along the way!

(By: Sabrina W., Gr. 11 student at Vaughan Road Academy)



Students learning from Vaughn Road Academy Leaders how to make Glitter Jars!

## Mental Wellness as Interplay of Joint Efforts of Staff, Students and Parents

Mental wellness is a concept that embraces and interconnects all components of the educational system: children, parents, teachers, support staff, professional support services and administrators. Mental wellness refers to taking care of oneself, people in your life, and of your surroundings. Learning to take care of self is an important step to maintain good work-life balance, which has a positive ripple effect on different levels in the education system. This raises the importance of school staff to develop good understanding of emotional regulation issues and learn to implement effective strategies to help students in distress.

A group of teachers at Clinton P.S. participated in a six-week workshop led by the psychologist Dr. Dessy Marinova which focused on developing awareness and understanding of mental health issues in children and adults.

**The main themes of the workshop included** (1) origins of mood disorders and emotional regulation difficulties, (2) the world of an anxious/depressed students/individuals (e.g., thinking patterns; ways to make sense of success and failures), (3) strategies to help with emotional regulation in the classroom (individual and group strategies), (4) strategies to reinforce collaboration with parents, (5) coping with ones' own emotions in response to stressful situations, and (6) establishing and maintaining a healthy life-work balance. Each session concluded with homework designed to help the participants reflect on and engage in experiential learning of discussed approaches in their classroom and their personal life.

The first session was dedicated to developing awareness and understanding of mental health issues, which included identifying risk and protective factors in individuals' (teacher, students) life: genetic predispositions to mental illness, life stresses, and psychosocial factors at individual, family, and societal levels during important developmental transitions. The teachers engaged in experiential exercises which helped them recognize the relationship between their own mindset and their ability to understand, modify, and customize their approach to individuals with emotional regulation difficulties. In reference to this, special attention was paid to recognize non-verbal and verbal cues and learn to acknowledge their own and students' feelings that arise in a variety of emotionally loaded situations.

The second session focused on self-care. Breathing and mindfulness exercises were introduced, discussed and practiced. Moreover, the teachers embarked on a journey of identifying patterns of the interplay between specific thoughts, emotions and actions in themselves and their students. Special attention was given to understanding and practicing validation of their own and students' feelings in daily life.

Sessions three and four were dedicated to addressing effectively students' daily needs, rapport and motivation building, and using effective "emotion" language to help students calm down when they are distressed. Participants learned to challenge gently negative biases in thinking, reality testing, and thought balancing. The relationship between flexible thinking and effective emotional regulation during stressful situations was discussed, experienced and practiced during the sessions and in real life situations.

The fifth session highlighted the importance of learning to be a role model for students, other staff members, and parents. The teachers recalled how important people in their lives shaped their love of learning, teaching and helping self and others. In this session, the teachers learned to identify stages of grief process observed in parents of children with special needs and involving parents in collaborative problem solving throughout the school year. New Year resolutions exercises helped teachers identify specific goals to improve learning of students with special needs and their classes as a whole.

The sixth session summarized the themes from the previous sessions by introducing the RULER approach which was developed by Marc Brackett. The teachers engaged in discussions about main components of the RULER approach: (1) **R**ecognizing emotions, (2) **U**nderstanding emotions, (3) **L**abeling emotions, (4) **E**xpressing emotions, and (5) **R**egulating emotions. The teachers learned to use this approach in several layers of their teaching practice which included discussion of stories and historical events, daily interactions with students, small and major incidents which prompted discussions with individual students or the whole class.

The emotional regulation workshop aimed to instill several take-home messages: (1) *Take a good care of yourself*, (2) *Keep working on learning about your students*, (3) *Adopt a flexible and open mindset*, (4) *Maintain a sense of hope and optimism even in the most challenging situations*, (5) *Keep in mind that your sense of meaning of your work has a positive effect on you, your students, their parents, school staff, and the society as a whole*.

Here is what the workshop participants thought about their experience:

**Participant one:** "The workshops were very interactive with lots of opportunities to practice newly learned strategies and receive feedback. Each week we were given small homework assignments consisting of practicing newly learned techniques in our classrooms. This model allowed for consolidation of the material. We were given the opportunity to practice new techniques and build on these strategies from week to week. Also, our staff was cautioned to be aware of our own stress levels and ensure we take care of our own mental health. I found this supportive learning invaluable."

**Participant two:** "I have learned to use effectively a new language of emotion which is helping me talk to kids when they are upset and calm them down"

**Participant three:** "I have applied some of the strategies to a girl who was distressed due to being bullied. She calmed down immediately and joined her peers at recess."

(By: Dr. Dessy Marinova, Psychologist – Area B)

## Child and Youth Services Poster Contest - Belonging: For You and Me in Our Schools!

The TDSB Mental Health and Wellness Team has identified the theme of "Belonging" for this year's Children's Mental Health Week. In keeping with this theme, the Child and Youth Services Poster contest will focus on Belonging in Our School.

We suggest that school staff facilitate discussions about the importance of belonging. All students and school staff should feel that they belong in the classroom, on the playground, and as welcome members of the school community. Helpful questions to encourage consideration and discussion may include:

- What does it mean to belong?
- What helps you to feel like you belong at school?
- How can you help others to experience belonging at school?
- What does belonging help you with?
- What does belonging at school look like to you?

Awards and prizes will be given at a reception on May 6, 2016 at 5050 Yonge Street in the cafeteria. Students, parents/guardians and school community members will be invited to attend the celebration!

### How to Participate

- Step 1: School staff will encourage students to visually express themselves by exploring belonging in our schools.
- Step 2: School staff will then send a photo of the 11X17 inch poster to [Maggie.Medeiros@tdsb.on.ca](mailto:Maggie.Medeiros@tdsb.on.ca) by April 15, 2016 and will save all original posters for printing purposes.
- Step 3: Wait for the posters to be judged. The winners will be announced on the week of April 18th, 2016 and will be chosen from the following grade categories: JK-2, 3-5, 6-8, 9-12. Pizza parties and other prizes to be WON. The winning poster designs will be posted throughout the TDSB! The winning posters will be made available for printing to display during Mental Health Week – May 1 – 7, 2016!

(By: Christine Gaitens, Chief of Child and Youth Services)

**Belonging: For You and Me in Our Schools!**

**POSTER CONTEST**

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**The winning posters will be made available for printing to display during **Mental Health Week!****

What Does it mean to belong?      What helps you to feel like you belong at school?  
What does belonging help you with?      How can you help others feel like they belong at school?  
What does belonging at school look like to you?

**Submission deadline extended to April 15, 2016**

### Mental Health and Well-Being Core Leadership Team

*Heather Johnson & Saleem Haniff, Social Workers, Mental Health and Well-Being – System Support*  
*Rose D'Alimonte, Chief of Social Work/Attendance – Area D*  
*Marcia Powers-Dunlop, Interim Senior Manager – Professional Support Services*  
*Sandy Spyropoulos, Executive Superintendent – Student Support Services and Care*  
*Leslie Fox, Executive Assistant – Student Support Services and Care*



## Parents as Partners Conference: Saturday, April 16, 2016

The Parents as Partners conference is open to all parents and caregivers of students who attend TDSB schools. Lunch and childcare are provided. Workshops will be offered on the topic of Mental Health & Well-Being, such as Executing Functioning: What Every Parent Needs to Know; Parents Have Stress Tool; All Families Welcome Here: LGBTQ Families in the TDSB; Parents as Partners Supporting Children's Mental Health & Well-Being at the TDSB; Anxiety Level 101 – Is It Time To Worry?; The Digital Age: Problem Video Game Playing and Youth Mental Health; Loosen Up Your Family Funny Bones! Humour and Well-Being in Families; Mindful Parenting and many more.

Keynote Speakers are:

**Dr. Marie Wilson** is has been one of the three Commissioners chosen to lead the historic Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada since 2009. The Commission has been probing into the history and impacts of more than a century of forced residential schooling for aboriginal children. Ms. Wilson came to be a Commissioner following more than 30 years of professional experience as an award-winning journalist, trainer and senior executive manager. For several years, Marie Wilson served as an associate board member of what was to become APTN, the Aboriginal Peoples Television Network. Over the years she has also worked with various other boards and agencies committed to social justice, journalism and civic engagement, community, spiritual and international development and the well-being of children and youth.

**Dr. Ian Manion** is a clinical psychologist and scientist-practitioner who has worked for over 30 years with children, youth and families. He is a clinical professor in the School of Psychology at the University of Ottawa and the Director of Youth Mental Health Research at the University of Ottawa's Institute for Mental Health Research. He serves as the Inaugural Co-Chair of the National Infant, Child and Youth Mental Health Consortium and the Principal Lead for the National School-Based Mental Health and Substance Use Consortium. He is actively involved in research in the areas of parent/child interactions, community mental health promotion, youth depression and youth suicide. Dr. Manion is co-founder of Youth Net/ Réseau Ado, a bilingual community-based mental health promotion program with satellites across Canada and in Europe. This program strives to understand the mental health issues facing youth, and to better address these issues with sensitivity to gender, age, culture, and geography.



**Parent Conference 2016**  
**Parents as Partners**

 Toronto District School Board

**Saturday, April 16, 2016**  
8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.  
**Allstream Centre**  
105 Princes' Blvd, Toronto, ON M6K 3C3

- Transportation available
- Fun and FREE child care activities
- Lunch provided
- Sign Language Interpreters, Language Interpreters and Blind/Low-Vision accommodation available

In collaboration with

 Ontario MINISTRY OF EDUCATION

 PIAC  
Parent Involvement Advisory Council

 SEAC  
School-Engaged Advisory Council

 Mental Health and Well-Being Parent Partnership Committee

 Model Schools for Inner Cities

 Parent 101

**Parents as Partners Conference 2016** is a FREE conference. Whether your child is just beginning on their educational journey in elementary school or closer to graduation and planning for the future, there are informative and empowering sessions for parents/guardians and caregivers of students of all ages and all stages of education.

**Keynote Speakers**

**Dr. Marie Wilson**  
Commissioner,  
Truth and Reconciliation  
Commission of Canada

**Dr. Ian Manion**  
Child and Youth  
Mental Health Expert

For more information and to register, visit  
**ParentsAsPartners.ca**