

KIDS: Events taking place from May 2 - 9 with the help of The Anti-Stigma Task Force



MARK WANZEL The Barrie Examiner

Several local groups will be joining forces as 'The Anti-Stigma Task Force' to recognize Children's Mental Health Week with a series of activities throughout the community.

Children's Mental Health Week

FROM THE INSIDE Interactive Workshop

May 4 in Barrie

During Children's Mental Health Week (May 2-9) you are invited to participate in a workshop which will enhance your understanding of the challenges faced by children, youth and families in Simcoe County.

The two-hour workshop, *From the Inside*, will begin at 1 p.m. on Tuesday, May 4 at the Bank of Montreal at 4 Simcoe St. in Barrie.

From the Inside is an interactive workshop for education professionals, direct service workers, administrators, families and other community members to gain insight into what it is like for a child living with mental illness.

The workshop simulations offer participants an experiential opportunity to better understand the impact of child and youth mental illness on more than 654,000 Ontario children.

By gaining insight, participants will have gained an increased capacity to respond appropriately and proactively to children and families struggling in school, the workplace, and community.

The following is an at-a-glance look at a local group that has been formed to help children and youths dealing with mental health issues. This coming week has been declared as Children's Mental Health Week and a series of activities have been planned locally and at Queen's Park.

The Anti-Stigma Task Force

SCOPE

The Anti-Stigma Task Force was established by the COMPASS — Communities in Partnership with Schools Co-Management Committee with a mandate to further the understanding of stigma, the barriers that stigma creates for children and to move towards eradicating those barriers.

MEMBERSHIP

The Task Force is made up of representatives from New Path Youth and Family Services, Kinark Child and Family Services, Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA), Children's Aid Society (CAS), Simcoe Outreach Services, Parents for Children's Mental Health, members of the community and First Nations/Metis/Inuit representatives. The chair is the Manager of Community Awareness of CMHA.

DEFINITION

Although stigma can pertain to a variety of conditions, the Task Force decided to target mental health stigma and include both adults and youth. It was further decided that the Task Force would use the definition of stigma as defined by the Mental Health Commission of Canada:

"Stigma is typically a social process, experienced or anticipated, characterized by exclusion, rejection, blame or devaluation that results from experience or anticipation of an adverse social judgment about a person or group. This judgment is based on an enduring feature of identity conferred by a health problem, or health-related condition. And the judgment is, in some way, medically unwarranted."

SCHOOLS PARTICIPATING IN CHILDREN'S MENTAL HEALTH WEEK

Nantyr Shores Secondary School

Who: New Path Youth and Family Services, The New Mentality Team and Youth Engagement Committee.

What: An afternoon seminar called "Breaking the Silence Together"

Where: To be held at Nantyr Shores Secondary School in the Library (1146 Anna Maria Ave., Innisfil)

When: Tuesday, May 4 from 11 a.m. — 3 p.m.

Why: To give young people a chance to come together to learn about youth mental health needs. All in an attempt to "Break the Silence" that people with mental illness face, especially during their adolescent years.

On May 3, 4, and 5, various SCDSB schools will be incorporating the "Walk for Children's Mental Health" into their daily physical activity, including:

- **Connaught Public School** – May 3, at 2:30 p.m.
- **Cundles Heights Public School** – May 3, at noon.
- **Marchmont Public School** – May 4, at 3:20 p.m.
- **Nantyr Shores Secondary School** – May 4, from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m.
- **Cookstown Central Public School** – May 5, at 2:30 or 3 p.m.
- **Huron Park Public School** – May 5, at 3 p.m.

For more details on what's going on during Children's Mental Health Week, visit www.kidsmentalhealth.ca.

QUEEN'S PARK

TOPIC

Parents for Children's Mental Health asking to have May 7 declared as Children's Mental Health Awareness Day.

PANEL

Sarah Cannon – executive director, Parents for Children's Mental Health;

Valerie Pringle – Canadian television host and journalist;

Andrea Howarth – Leader, NDP;

Wayne (Smokey) Thomas – president, OPSEU;

Dr. David Goldbloom – Mental Health Commission of Canada;

Dr. Simon Davidson – Campaign for Fairness

TIMES

11 a.m. – Press Conference – Public Presentations on the South Lawn of Queen's Park

1:30 p.m. – Reading of private member's bill into legislature

PRIVATE MEMBER'S BILL

To attend the reading of the private member's bill, send an e-mail to admin@pcmh.ca indicating your interest.

For anyone wanting to participate in any one of the events or to get more info, contact Yolanda Gallo, Parents for Children's Mental Health, Simcoe County Chapter, at 252-9169, or by e-mail at simcoecounty@pcmh.ca.

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