

Hello Families of Joseph Giles Elementary School,

I am Jennifer Martin Wells, the School Psychologist at Joseph Giles Elementary School. As we all know, we are in a very challenging time once again in Nova Scotia. This can be scary and difficult for adults and children alike. As we all try our best to get through this, I thought I would share some strategies, resources and tips that might be useful during this period when we are all spending more time at home. Talking to your children about these and maybe doing some together might be helpful for everyone in the family.

- 1) **Set time to take care of yourself.** This may include getting exercise, fresh air, hobbies that you enjoy, being mindful/practicing meditation, finding opportunities to laugh (watching a funny movie or Youtube videos), drawing/journaling/writing, doing crafts, making/eating your favourite food, taking a bath or shower, playing a favourite game or doing a puzzle, listening to music, etc. The list of ways to look after ourselves may look different for each of us. The important thing is to choose some that work for you and do them when you can.
- 2) **Help and show kindness to others.** Research has shown that when we help and are kind to others, positive gains are experienced by both the person who receives and the person who provides the help and/or kindness. This can be done in many forms. Some of these may include helping someone with a task/ job/ assignment, making a snack or meal for someone, offering to pick up someone's groceries when you get yours, taking your pet for a walk or offering to take a neighbour's pet for a walk if they aren't able to, paying for someone's coffee as you go through the drive through, thanking the essential workers that you see, your co-workers, or yourself if you are one, giving someone a compliment, drawing a picture or sending a thank you card. Remember, you also will help yourself feel better when you are kind to/help others.
- 3) **Staying connected with others.** While this can seem difficult to do with the current restrictions, thanks to technology there are many ways to connect. We can spend quality time with the people we live with, talk to people on the phone, send texts and emails, face time, have group chats, Zoom socials, and say hello to our neighbours when we see them at a 6- foot distance, or send a card in the mail.

These ideas can be good for your children as well as yourselves, as we all need support during these uncertain and stressful times. I would also like to share with you links to several websites that may be useful in supporting your children. Some of the students have already been introduced to mindfulness through either the MindUp curriculum, Yomind, or other mindfulness activities that their teachers have used. Whether or not your child has been introduced to mindfulness and even if you have other children at another school, this information and these exercises may be useful for you and your children.

<https://mindup.org/category/mindup-at-home/>

<http://www.yomind.com/resource-portal>

You can also try this quick grounding technique when you or your child are ever feeling overwhelmed. Stop for a moment and name or think about:

**5**-things you can see, **4**- things you can feel, **3** – things you can hear, **2**-things you can smell, **1**-thing you can taste.

I wish you all well, and I hope that you can take something useful from what I have shared with you.