

Mental Health and Resiliency Supports

May 1, 2020

Supporting the mental, spiritual, and emotional wellbeing of First Nations children and youth, as well as their educators, is an essential part of our collective response to the COVID-19 pandemic. To help meet this need, the First Nations Education Steering Committee (FNESC) and First Nations Schools Association (FNSEA) are providing this compilation of resources and available support services focused on mental health and wellness. These resources can be used and adapted to address the stress, anxiety, and social isolation that students, parents, or educators may be experiencing during this challenging situation.

During this time, students need to know that they are valued and that they are still part of a school community. Students' sense of well-being may continue to shift as the pandemic evolves. Schools and communities should keep in mind that students who were not considered vulnerable prior to the COVID-19 outbreak may now be experiencing mental health challenges.

We recognize that schools and families may want to adapt these resources to better address the priorities of their particular community.

Your ideas for additional resources are welcome and we will make this update available on FNESC's [COVID-19 information page](#).

FNHA Mental Health and Wellness Resources

The following First Nations Health Authority (FNHA) resources focus on First Nations approaches to nurturing mental health and wellness. In addition, the FNHA maintains a [web portal](#) featuring additional COVID-19 resources.

[Coping with COVID-19](#) and [The Impact of COVID-19 on Mental Health](#) are two short videos featuring Dr. Nel Wieman, Senior Medical Officer, FNHA.

[Mental wellness and cultural supports available during the pandemic](#) summarizes a variety of resources, including telephone and online supports as well as health benefits relating to mental wellness and counselling.

[Staying Connected during the Pandemic](#) recommends drawing upon cultural strengths to stay connected while we practice social distancing and includes a list of ideas for spending quality time with children.

[Supporting Children in a Time of Crisis](#) describes how to share age-appropriate information about COVID-19 and offers tips for supporting children's emotional health.

Programs and Resources to Promote Mental Health and Resiliency

In times of increased stress and anxiety it is important to prioritize and promote mental well-being. The following resources offer strategies and tips to support the mental well-being of youth, adults, and families, many of which can be encouraged as part of the delivery of educational opportunities.

[Canadian Mental Health Association](#) provides resources for youth (ages 15+) and adults, including the BounceBack Program for managing depression and stress as well as the BlueWave program for help with mental health and substance use.

[DASH BC Healthy at Home School Resources](#) include adaptable mental health resources for students and educators related to healthy emotional regulation.

[EASE \(Everyday Anxiety Strategies for Educators\) at Home Program](#), are adaptations of the EASE classroom activities for use at home by parents and caregivers to support children's mental health and continuous learning. Kits have been developed for Grades K-3 and 4-7, providing five weeks of activities and practical strategies to help guide parents and caregivers in managing their children's anxiety during the COVID-19 pandemic and beyond. *For assistance implementing EASE materials, First Nations schools can contact Dean Heald, SEP Coach, FNEESC, at deanheald@fnesc.ca*

[Managing Anxiety and Stress in Families with Children and Youth during the COVID-19 Outbreak, from Shared Care BC](#) provides tips for identifying when children are stressed and ideas for how to support them.

[WE Well-Being Program](#) provides free, virtual learning tools aimed at K-12 students experiencing anxiety and social isolation.

Help Phone Lines, Chat Lines, and Counselling

The following phone, chat line, and counselling services are available to students and adults who may require more direct support with issues of mental health and wellness as a result of the pandemic.

[KUU-US Crisis Line Society](#) operates a 24 hour provincial Indigenous crisis line for Adults/Elders (250-723-4050), Child/Youth (250-723-2040), Toll-free Line (1-800-588-8717).

[Kids Help Phone](#) (1-800-668-6868) is a national support service, offering professional counselling, information, referrals, and volunteer-led, text-based support to young people.

[Kelty Mental Health Resource Centre](#) at BC Children's Hospital provides resources and information for people working in the school community including educators, counsellors, administrators, and support staff.

[Here2Talk](#) is a new program providing post-secondary students with free, confidential, single-session services by app, phone, or online chat, 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

[Hope for Wellness Helpline – On-Line Chat Counseling Service](#) (Toll-free: 1-855-242-3310) offers immediate mental health counselling and crisis intervention through a dedicated helpline as well as an online chat platform.