

# By Your Side

Parent/caregiver resources to support mental health learning  
and well-being in every family

Good afternoon,

We are excited to share with you the launch of **By Your Side**, a new toolkit and learning hub designed to support parents/caregivers in engaging in meaningful mental health learning. **By Your Side** was co-created by Ontario parents/caregivers and school mental health professionals. Extensive consultation with key stakeholder groups informed resource development.

We know that parents and caregivers want their children to be physically and mentally healthy, and already have many effective tools and strategies in place.

**By Your Side** recognizes the expertise of parents and caregivers and offers resources to support and strengthen mental health and well-being in every family.

**By Your Side** includes two new products: [a toolkit for school staff](#) and a dedicated [parent/caregiver learning hub](#) for families.

The **By Your Side** Toolkit equips school staff with accessible, ready-to-use materials to foster meaningful partnerships with parents and caregivers in mental health learning.

This comprehensive toolkit features:

- Info sheets and short videos tailored for parents and caregivers.
- Slide decks, pre-written articles, and communication templates to make family engagement easy and effective.

The new **By Your Side Parent/ Caregiver Learning Hub** is an online resource centre designed to meet the needs of Ontario's families. Resources and supports are made available in multiple formats—including web content, PDFs, videos and webinars (coming soon!) to ensure families can access information and strategies that promote mental health and well-being at home.



## Key topics in the parent/caregiver learning hub include:

- understanding mental health
- promoting mental health at home
- supporting mental health at school
- stress and anxiety management
- substance use prevention
- navigating digital technology use
- reaching out for help

## Features to ensure accessibility:

Both the Toolkit and the Hub prioritize accessibility, featuring resources that are culturally responsive, identity-affirming, evidence-informed, and tailored to a wide range of learning preferences.

**As a Mental Health Leader, you play a vital role in ensuring that the By Your Side toolkit and hub are effectively introduced throughout your board.**

The [SMH-ON By Your Side Mobilizer Kit](#) will help you with that work.

It includes:

- A **ready/made article** that can be the basis of an email to introduce **By Your Side** in your organization, or as an insert into newsletters or intranet posts
- A set of **key messages** you can use in your communications.
- A template **press release** for boards to share.
- Ready-made communication materials school leaders can use as a foundation for internal and external communication about **By Your Side**.

This includes a **template communication kit** for school leaders that features:

- school-wide promotion announcements
- school notification system message
- newsletter/webpage insert
- letter for parents/caregivers
- school administrator tip sheet
- Template social media copy to post and share



- Ready-made **slide decks** to use as needed for different audiences and for a variety of session lengths including:
  - a slide deck that can be used as an overview of the modules with staff
  - a slide deck to use as a brief introduction at a parent meeting

[Click here to access the full mobilizer kit](#)

## How You Can Help:

We encourage you to:

1. Share the **By Your Side** Toolkit with school staff highlighting how it can support their work with families.
2. Help staff to use the resources to reinforce and strengthen the tools and strategies that parents and caregivers already use to support their child.
3. Promote the **By Your Side** Parent/Caregiver Learning Hub to parents and caregivers through your communication channels.
4. Use the toolkit's resources to strengthen your board's mental health engagement strategies.

## Learn more:

Mental Health Leadership Teams will have an opportunity to attend a virtual launch event to learn more about the **By Your Side** Toolkit and Parent/Caregiver Learning Hub.

Please join us on February 19<sup>th</sup> to walk through the new learning hub, toolkit and mobilizer package, and answer any questions you may have,

The session will be offered in French and English

## Coming Soon!

### Resources designed specifically for parents and caregivers who identify as Indigenous

In partnership with First Peoples Wellness Circle, stay tuned for more information on these supportive, culturally-specific resources, designed in consultation with First Nations, Metis, and Inuit parents and caregivers.



## **Resources designed to support parents/caregivers across Tiers.**

SMH-ON is working in partnership with Children's Mental Health Ontario, Parents for Children's Mental Health to provide resources to parents/caregivers across Tiers. **By Your Side** offers primarily Tier 1 and 2 resources for parents/caregivers, while Children's Mental Health Ontario's resources are focused on Tier 3 and 4 resources, to support parents/caregivers of children and youth with mental health challenges. Stay tuned for more supports to come, or consult their [Family Resource Hub](#)

## **Webinar series for parents/caregivers.**

In the Spring, SMH-ON will be launching a 5-part webinar series focused on addictions prevention. The webinars will feature conversations between parents/caregivers and leading experts in addictions prevention and literacy. The webinar series will provide information on substance use and addictive behaviours, including - how to talk about substance use at home, how to recognize signs and concerns, and how to provide support at home and ways to seek help at school and in the community

The live webinars will provide opportunities for participants to ask questions, and all webinars will be recorded for future access on the By Your Side learning hub.

Webinar topics will include:

- How to talk about substance use at home
- Current trends in student substance use in Ontario – what parents/caregivers need to know
- Recognizing signs of substance use and addictive behaviours
- Technology overuse and problematic gaming
- The intersection of addictions and mental health

**Stay connected for more details on registration**

## **Next Steps:**

Join us in supporting student mental health and well-being  
School Mental Health Ontario invites school staff and families to explore these new resources as you work together to support the mental health and well-being for every student.

Click here to access the [By Your Side Toolkit](#) and [Parent Learning Hub](#). Please share these resources broadly within your schools and communities. Please share this memo with your school leaders to further support awareness of the resources in your board.

Thank you.

