

The 6th Annual PIC & WRAPSC Parent Conference

Empowering Students with Parent Engagement

Session Notes
Saturday, April 8, 2017

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PARENT AS ROLE MODEL

Presented by Nahla Kor

Notes prepared by Brooke Robinson

Main Message within the Session

- ✓ Define Empowerment
 - To give power, authority, take initiative, make decisions, accept consequences.
- ✓ Ages and Stages
 - Move from control to influence as your children grow
 - 0-13 – Show and Tell/Directive
 - 14-18 – Suggest, Encourage, Support, Coach, and Counsel. Guide Mostly.
 - If you want to maintain positive relationships with your kids into young adulthood:
 - Be willing to shift control and accountability as they get older
 - Modify your behaviour and vocabulary accordingly
 - Play the “parent card” sparingly
- ✓ Wise Parenting – where do we fall?
 - When 10,000 American teens over 4 decades were surveyed about their parent’s behaviour – those who fared best had parents who were warm, respectful and demanding.
- ✓ Parenting with Emotional Intelligence
 - EI: Measure of our social and emotional functioning.
 - Knowing what sets us off, how we manage emotions, overcome setbacks, build relationships.
 - Foundational EI Characteristics: Self-Regard, Emotional Self Awareness, Emotional Expression, Impulse control.
- ✓ Recognizing Triggers
 - The way you are triggered by your kids’ behaviour speaks to your ability to handle your own emotions.
- ✓ Establishing Healthy Boundaries
 - What are you willing to tolerate/not tolerate?
 - Establish ground rules to prevent escalation in conflict.
 - Use “if/then” format to reinforce the norms.
- ✓ Parenting as Role Model for Communication
 - Here is what I see...
 - This is how I feel about it...
 - This is how it affects me....
 - What I need is....
 - My request is....
 - How do you see it?
 - How do you feel about it?

Presentation Highlights

- ✓ Recommended Reading: GRIT by Angela Duckworth
- ✓ No matter what, your kids need to know that you care, that you believe in them, and that you are their biggest champion.
- ✓ The way you are triggered by your kids' behaviour speaks to your ability to handle your own emotions.
- ✓ It takes 20 minutes for you to decompress long enough to start thinking clearly again when your emotions are being triggered. In the heat of the moment – say nothing, breathe, take a time out.

Key Points That Resonated

- ✓ What is one small thing you are doing for your kids now, that you can give back? As in - What is one thing you are doing, that they can do for themselves?
- ✓ By the time your kids are teens, you no longer have control.
- ✓ Be consistent and follow-through
- ✓ If you don't enforce boundaries when the kids are young, the challenges will only become greater as they get older. Be mindful of the language you use, and the way you communicate with your kids at all stages/ages.
- ✓ Growing in EI is a lifelong journey

ANXIETY AND MOOD MANAGEMENT

Presented by Iven Chung and Andrea Wiebe

Notes prepared by Barb Dowling

www.delrosariopsych.com

Main Message within the Session

- ✓ Managing stress & anxiety. Positive stress (face challenges) & negative stress (overwhelmed) affects quality of life
- ✓ Invite children to talk about feelings. Then actions or thoughts that can help restructure thinking. What is in your control and what is not?
- ✓ Minds are Velcro from negative thoughts and Teflon for positive thoughts.
- ✓ Cognitive Behavioural Strategy:
 - Coping skills
 - Mindfulness (decide what to pay attention to, notice when you aren't paying attention, accept without judgement that you've been distracted, return your attention to your target)
 - Self-soothing
 - Distractions

Presentation Highlights

Acknowledge and name the feelings, develop a vocabulary for feelings.

Don'ts:

- Downplay feelings, children's feelings are very real
- Ask leading questions
- Rush them (process for children)
- Flood (need your safety)
- Ignore your own stress (take care of your own anxiety)
- Pass on fears
- Avoid giving consequences for misbehaviour
- Work in a structure approach star plan (cognitive behaviour therapy (CBT))
- STAR - S-SAD or Scared; T- Thinking negative thoughts; A-Actions or thoughts that can help; R – Results and rewards (What happened, how do they feel now, any behavioural or situational change)

Key Points That Resonated

- ✓ Clarify feelings (Draw body for children to pinpoint on body picture where feelings are affecting them.)
- ✓ Increase awareness of emotion to manage them
- ✓ Rate intensity of feelings to engage correct strategy
- ✓ Actions to help them
- ✓ 3 behavioural coping skills:
 - Deep breathing – slow and deliberate from the diaphragm
 - Guided imagery – close eyes and envision a calming experience
 - Progressive muscle relaxation (demonstrated in person)
- ✓ Rewards – self affirmations along with small rewards
- ✓ "Spices"
- ✓ Encourage your kids to care for all aspects of themselves (Social, physical, intellection, creative, emotional, spiritual)

FOOD: HOW IT AFFECTS LEARNING AND BEHAVIOUR

Presented by Christine Gingerich

Main Message within the Session

- ✓ Improved nutrition will always improve learning & behaviour.
- ✓ Too many processed foods & chemicals result in malnutrition, & negatively affect learning & behaviour, especially in children.
- ✓ Use “whole” foods, not processed foods
- ✓ Avoid simple carbs, eat complex (living foods like fruit & veggies)
- ✓ Eating processed food is like riding a bike without air in the tires or a car without gas.

Presentation Highlights

- ✓ See the top 10 tips on the handout.

Key Points That Resonated

1. Sugar is highly addictive.
2. Food should not be white, which means it is stripped of all nutrients.
3. Processed foods last a really long time because they are full of chemicals.
4. It is cheaper to eat whole foods.
5. Poor protein does not build/repair tissue. You must also include plant proteins.
6. Poor food choices is a learned behaviour, and you can retrain your palate.
7. No devices in the bedroom! Should be a haven of rest.
8. Sleep: 1hr pre-midnight = 2hrs after midnight.
9. Make an intention, well-planned course of action.
10. Start small!



Food: How it Affects Learning & Behaviour

By Christine Gingerich BA, BEd, PTS • 519-662-3548 • www.optimalYOU.ca

SAD (Standard American Diet) way of eating in North America:

- Processed foods
- High in refined sugars
- Low in *real* nutrients (not synthetic)
- Over-cooked
- Chemically modified and treated
- Low in fibre

All leading research in this area agrees:

- We consume far too many processed foods
- We ingest far too many 'unknowns' that the body doesn't recognize
- This collectively creates massive malnourishment
- Malnourishment *always* affects learning and behaviour
- Improved nutrition *always* affects learning and behaviour in positive ways

Dr Derrick Lonsdale, MD says,

"Scientifically we have evidence that this approach to diet (i.e. empty calories offering no vitamin or mineral supportive qualities) is changing the balance of neurological transmission which is the hallmark of the function of the brain & the central nervous system. It means that the quality and quantity of nutrition can change your behaviour."

Barbara Reed-Stitt says,

"Ignoring the nutrition of the body is the most dangerous mistake one can make. A malnourished central nervous system will inevitably lead to serious physical and behavioural problems; problems which no amount of medication or psychiatry can touch."

Top 10 Tips – Healthy Food & Behaviour Choices to Make:

1. My Suggestion: Eat Breakfast!

- Fresh, living fruits each AM
- Quality proteins, fats and carbs (eggs, oatmeal, granola, raw nuts/seeds, omelet with veggies...)

2. My Suggestion: Avoid *simple* carbohydrates, eat *complex* carbohydrates...

- Avoid – refined flour, white bread, cookies, cakes, candies, fries, macaroni, soda, most "juices"
- Eat – whole grains, living fruits/veggies

3. My Suggestion: Eat unprocessed, whole foods as often as possible...

- Avoid – processed, "man-modified" foods: cold cuts, hotdogs, TV dinners, canned & boxed foods
- Eat – foods in the state in which they were created as often as possible

4. My Suggestion: Eat variety/quality proteins and Omega-3 Fats...

- Avoid – commercially prepared hamburgers, hotdogs, cold cuts, bacon, pizza, fried meats
- Eat – naturally fed meats, fish, raw nuts & seeds, legumes/lentils, free-range eggs; consider Omega-3 supplementation

5. My Suggestion: Eat variety of living foods!

- Avoid – canned, boxed, packaged, microwaved, processed foods
- Enjoy – fresh, colourful, **living** foods that contain living enzymes – the spark of life!

6. My Suggestion: Do a food elimination test... (*Book: Allergies Disease in Disguise by Carolee Bateson-Koch)

- Avoid all foods that *may* cause reactions. Worst offenders: dairy, white sugar, wheat, corn, soy, chocolate and eggs
- Do a 12 week (minimum) elimination test – then reintroduce one at a time to note reactions

7. My Suggestion: Drink lots of water; Eliminate soda, juice! <http://www.eatright.org/kids> (search "How Much Water?")

- See a qualified health practitioner to test and detox from chemicals and internal toxins (liver, heavy metal, parasite detox to start).

8. My Suggestion: Exercise daily!

- Especially outside! Soak up fresh air and vitamin D – get more oxygen to the brain!

9. My Suggestion: Reduce screen time! <http://articles.mercola.com/sites/articles/archive/2012/07/04/cellphone-radiation-may-cause-adhd.aspx>

- Avoid the electro-magnetic/radiation damaging effects of techie devices – and the inactivity associated with them!

10. My Suggestion: Get more sleep at the right times; *Early to bed, early to rise, makes a man healthy, wealthy & wise!*

- No lights/computers/TV/phones in bedroom

Increase Omega-3 Intake!

- Fatty fish and their oils – salmon, sardines
- Grass/natural fed animals and their meat
- Plant sources – EVCP flax, hemp, walnuts, almonds, borage oil, olive oil
- Capsule form – for therapeutic doses, be advised by a health practitioner (I recommend the *Protocol* brand)

Fast Food with Consequences

- Tertiary butylhydroquinone found in fast-food fries. TBHQ is a food preservative used in perfume, varnish, paint and a carcinogen.
- Dimethylpolysiloxane found in fast-food fries. An antifoaming agent also found in moisturizing creams and lotions. Irritates the digestive tract, nose and throat.
- Azodicarbonamide found in most commercially-prepared breads. Also used to produce foamed plastics. Increases allergies to other foods. Banned in Australia and Europe.

Food Additives with Consequences

There are many food additives that have negative effects on our learning, behaviour and physical well-being. Aspartame and "MSG" are two such dangerous additives to avoid. Most pre-packaged foods have ingredients added that contribute to problems with learning, behaviour and general health.

Ingredients that ALWAYS contain MSG:

Autolyzed Yeast	Glutamate	Calcium Caseinate
Gelatin	Glutamic Acid	Hydrolyzed Protein
Monopotassium Glutamate	Monosodium Glutamate	Sodium Caseinate
Textured Protein	Yeast Extract	Yeast Food/ Yeast Nutrient

Ingredients OFTEN containing MSG or that create MSG during processing:

Flavors and Flavorings	Seasonings	Natural Flavors and Flavorings	Soy Protein
Natural Pork Flavoring	Soy Protein Isolate	Natural Chicken Flavoring	Soy Sauce
Whey Protein	Malt Extract	Natural Beef Flavoring	Barley Malt
Carrageenan	Corn Starch	Malt Flavoring	Protease
Maltodextrin	Citric Acid	Powdered Milk	Pectin
Bouillon	Enzymes	Broth	Stock

Anything "Enzyme Modified" or "Ultra-Pasteurized" or "Protein Fortified"

Highly Recommended Resources:

- ✓ *FOOD & Behaviour ~ A Natural Connection* ~ Barbara Reed Stitt, PhD
- ✓ **The Impact of Healthy Food** http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OYG4V_hogzI
- ✓ <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KWYPjpbBSgQ&feature=related>
- ✓ *They Are What You Feed Them* ~ Dr Alex Richardson, PhD
- ✓ Mercola.com "The Shocking Dangers of MSG You Don't Know," videos Parts 1, 2, 3
<http://articles.mercola.com/sites/articles/archive/2007/08/28/dangers-of-msg.aspx?aid=CD12>
- ✓ [https://www.drfuhrman.com/library/junk food may limit childrens intelligence and learning ability.aspx](https://www.drfuhrman.com/library/junk%20food%20may%20limit%20childrens%20intelligence%20and%20learning%20ability.aspx)

Materials by Dr. Russell Blaylock, MD:

- ✓ *Excitotoxins: The Taste That Kills*
- ✓ <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7W-gba0GPwU>
- ✓ DVD: The Truth About Aspartame
- ✓ DVD: Nutrition and Behaviour

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EMPOWERING KIDS THROUGH SAFE AND OPEN DIALOGUE

Presented by Washington (from OK2BME)

Notes prepared by Erica Beck

Main Message within the Session

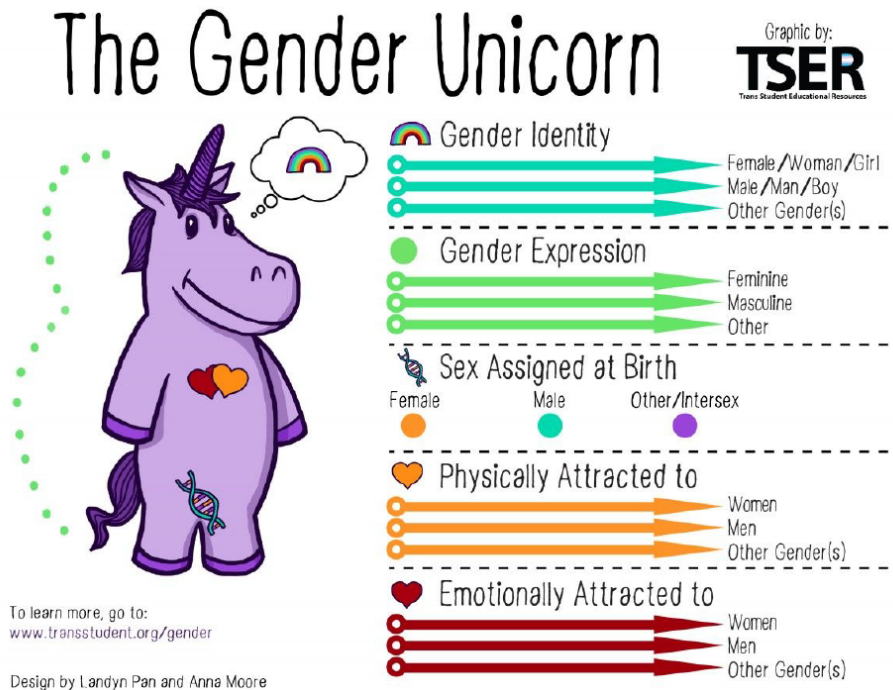
I'm sure the message at the afternoon session was different than ours as we were a very small group of 4 parents. What Washington had prepared, which was more along the Transgender lines, quickly changed to general conversation about parenting and supporting our youth.

Presentation Highlights

Washington was a great and knowledgeable person, and it was great to spend time in a small group chatting. Washington offered great insight to the couple parents in the room who's children had recently come out as Gay, and to the parent who was looking for support with a daughter who had just started dating a girl. Washington not only had first-hand experience as a Transgender individual, but as a parent and an education. Washington helped us understand how gender and sexuality were not the same. And how Gender was how you went to bed at night and sexuality was who you wanted to go to bed with. We talked about the Gender Unicorn, and talked about all the different ways that people can be attracted to another person.

Key Points That Resonated

Kids are looking for support in the experiences they are going through. All they want is acceptance and how LGBTQ individuals are the only people who need to ask for acceptance from those they love.



MINDFULNESS 101

Presented by Stephanie Van De Ven

Notes prepared by Erica Beck

Main Message within the Session

This session was about breathing, not letting the everyday stressors overwhelm us and how to bring us back to the present.

Presentation Highlights

This was the best way to end the day! We spend the whole session breathing, slow deep breaths and learned different techniques to help us in different situations. We listened to calming music, had wonderful essential oils diffusing, and came back to the present moment. We learned the importance of slowing down, breathing deeply, positive affirmations, and emptying our brains of all those thoughts that overwhelm us

Key Points That Resonated

To be present. Focus on your breathing and come back to the moment!

NURTURING CHILDREN'S INTERESTS

Presented by Susan and Maddie Cranston

Notes prepared by Brett Hutzal

Main Message within the Session

Nurturing your child's interests (no matter how random) will pay dividends.

Presentation Highlights

- Susan helped Maddie nurture her passion of sharks – which led to interests in oceans, conservation, and the environment.
- Maddie was encouraged to introduce herself to others who shared these interests and were experts in the fields. Susan took Maddie to places that fueled these passions.
- Maddie delivered her first speech at 9 years old and has had the opportunity to speak at many events over the years – you can view a video of Maddie speaking at Tedx (on YouTube.com).
- Maddie's initial interest in sharks led to many other passions (ie. baking, scuba diving, creating videos, etc) that proved to be complementary.
- Do not forget that "interests are as unique as a fingerprint". Let your child explore their own interests – encourage those interests, do not force your interests on your child.

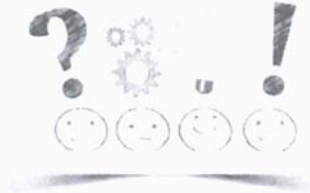
Key Points That Resonated

- You are the producer, director, and writer of your own life. Nobody wakes up wanting to be a supporting actor in their own life.
- "View from a dirty window" – clean the window or be aware of it.
- The behaviour often reflects the response.
- Rule of 3 – don't do more than a marine (ie. School plus two other extra-curricular).

Nurturing Children's Interests - Reference Guide

1) Child's Interests Activity Checklist Questions (source: CECLL)

- What makes your child smile and laugh?
- What gets and keeps your child's attention?
- What gets your child excited?
- What are your child's favourite things to do?
- What does your child work hard at doing?
- What "brings out the best" in your child?
- What gets your child to try new things?
- What does your child choose to do most often?



2) Discussing Your Child's Interests Questions (source: mychildsfuture.org)

- What are your favourite school subjects?
- What activities outside of school do you enjoy most?
- What hobbies would you like to have?
- What do you like to do with your friends?
- What special skills do you think you possess?
- What have you done that you are most proud of?
- What do you like to do with your free time?
- What types of books interest you the most?



3) Ask and Listen Sample Questions (source: psychcentral.com)

- What are your strengths?
- If you could live anywhere in the world, where would it be? Why?
- What are your goals for this school year?
- What do you like to do for fun?
- What do you wish we (your parents/caregivers) knew about you?
- What do you wish your friends or classmates knew about you?
- If you could have one wish, what would it be?



Books referenced in the presentation

- 1) Discover Your Child's Learning Style, Mariaemma Willis, M.S. and Victoria Kindle Hodson, M.A.
- 2) What I Wish I Knew When I Was 20, Tina Seelig
- 3) The Gentle Parent, L.R. Knost

DEMYSTIFYING THE WEB

Presented by Stephanie Rozek

Notes prepared by Brett Hutzal

Main Message within the Session

How to work together with your child to survive and thrive on the web.

Presentation Highlights

- ✓ Be aware of the messages you are sending your kids about the web.
- ✓ Realize the importance of digital literacy:
 - "I can do that!"
 - Complementing the teaching of math concepts used in school.
 - Logical reasoning.
- ✓ Online safety
 - Knowledge is power.
 - Trust is key.
 - Safety in sharing.
- ✓ Digital Native
 - Help your child become more discerning, fiscally responsible, skeptical
- ✓ Online addiction
 - Be involved, create rules, maintain trust, set controls, be available.

Key Points That Resonated

- ✓ Diversity, inclusion, and equity – even more important in the digital world.
- ✓ Teach your children to be digital creators, not only digital consumers.

EMPOWERING STUDENTS: HERO & GEM

Presented by Don Oberle, Paula Capa, Marcus Hoare, Ann Koenig and Melissa Stark (Vista Hills Team)

Notes prepared by Jill Magazine

Main Message within the Session

HERO stands for Hope, Efficacy, Resiliency and Optimism

GEM stands for Gratitude, Empathy and Mindfulness

- ✓ Research has been done on these particular traits.
- ✓ Vista Hills is using HERO and GEM as their character education program. They engage parents in this program in order to extend the learning and wanted to move forward with their school vision in partnership with parents and students.
- ✓ This program supports the well-being focus of the Ministry and school board and the three strategic priorities in our board strategic plan.
- ✓ Vista Hills is one of two schools (Riverside in Elmira is the other) that is piloting the HERO and GEM program with support from Plasticity labs. They are using a survey with the students at the start, middle and end to see what they can improve on for next year. Further down the road there may be consideration of how to role this out to the rest of the board.

Presentation Highlights

Hope – A feeling of wanting something to happen and believing that it could. Hope is wanting to achieve something and setting out to achieve that goal!

Efficacy – If you believe it, you can achieve! Efficacy is successfully completing a task with hard work. (Think – The Little Engine that Could)

Resiliency – The ability to become strong, healthy and successful again after a set-back.

Optimism – A feeling or belief that what you hope will happen, seeing the best in everyone or everything.

Gratitude - A feeling of appreciation or thanks.

Empathy – A feeling that you understand and share another person's experiences and emotions.

Mindfulness – An awareness of your thoughts, emotions or experiences in each moment – being able to be calm and regulate yourself.

What impact can focusing on HERO and GEM have?

- Focus on gratitude increases appreciation for themselves and others
- Focus on empathy and mindfulness fosters inclusivity, healthy peer relationships, awareness of emotions and feelings, self-regulation
- Focus on hope and optimism builds collaboration, goal setting and a positive outlook.
- Focus on resiliency and efficacy encourages self-confidence, problem solving, perseverance and bouncing back

How can parents and caregivers can engage in HERO and GEM?

1. Model them
2. Find a way to discuss the traits that works for your family
3. Review the concepts regularly (don't just check off one and then move to the next)
4. Allow the skills and mindset to develop over time

Key Points That Resonated

Importance of growth mindset:

- ✓ this term was coined by Carol Dweck
- ✓ we all have a fixed and growth mindset within us
- ✓ to benefit kids focus on the growth mindset at home and at school
- ✓ it's the idea that our basic abilities can be developed through resiliency and optimism
- ✓ those with a fixed mindset will get stuck on roadblocks while those with a growth mindset will then look for alternatives
- ✓ to foster growth mindset talk about on effort a lot and praise effort
- ✓ focus on the effort as being the learning
- ✓ there is commitment and empowerment when you focus on growth
- ✓ Empathy is not about how *you* would want to be treated, but means thinking about how the other person might want to be treated.
- ✓ Celebrating diversity means celebrating what we all have in common: unification of our differences.

- ✓ Even when kids can't name their emotions mindfulness helps them get in touch with their feelings.
- ✓ Everytime someone takes in feedback and alters one's thinking that's problem-solving.
- ✓ In all conversations with your kids, keep in mind the outcome and that you want your child's sense of self-worth to stay intact.

EMPOWERING YOUR TEEN

Presented by Shellie Deloyer

Notes prepared by Barb Dowling

Main Message within the Session

- ✓ Empower your teen towards success
- ✓ Setting the stage: mindset is everything
- ✓ Choosing education and career pathways
- ✓ Empowerment for success
- ✓ Goal setting & strategy
- ✓ Supporting your child

Presentation Highlights

- ✓ "I take full responsibility for everything that is and is not showing up in my life right now"
- ✓ Traits of successful people vs habits of disempowerment
- ✓ Habits don't define you, they are learned so you can unlearn them
- ✓ See potential – people are not their behaviours. Cannot define people based on their actions.
- ✓ As parents, we must believe in our children and their potential.

Key Points That Resonated

- ✓ Model for children – results vs reason, peace vs drama, creation vs repetition
- ✓ Responsibility – cause (you are the cause of what is in your life) and effect (outside affect you, responsibility outside of self).
- ✓ Success comes from calculated risks. Learn how to get back of the right path from failures.
- ✓ Move towards what you want in your life. What you focus on expands. You have the freedom and responsibility to make your own choices
- ✓ Fulfillment comes from moving in the direction of what you want in your life
- ✓ Fear and excitement come from the same area in the brain
- ✓ We're always at one of many transitions
- ✓ It takes commitment – habits, takes time, empower your child to do the same
- ✓ Everyone's highest intention is positive
- ✓ Career Planning
 - Ask your child what excites them (not job titles, about skills. Personality and values and skills will match to a job)

CHROMEBOOK 101

Presented by Emily Schmuck

Notes prepared by Joe Ortiz

Main Message within the Session

- ✓ Change is necessary
- ✓ How to work together: collaboration (student vs student; student vs teachers)

Presentation Highlights

- ✓ The government identified 6 key competencies or skills our students need to develop in order to thrive in the 21st century:
 1. Critical thinking & problem solving
 2. Innovation, creativity & entrepreneurship
 3. Learning to learn: self-awareness & self-directed learning
 4. Collaboration
 5. Communication
 6. Global citizenship
- ✓ The WRDSB has put huge effort to put tools in the hands of both teachers & students
- ✓ Explored Google (apps, G drive, docs, etc.)
- ✓ Teachers are required to stress the self-regulation strategies for each student

Key Points That Resonated

- ✓ Teachers need to change their way of teaching because of the use or implementation of technology
- ✓ Global citizenship (computer ethics, etc.)
- ✓ All students in WRDSB have a Google Drive

KNOWLEDGEHOOK

Presented by Uma Sunesh & Kawai Kong

Notes prepared by Alison Christiansen

Main Message within the Session

- ✓ Online software to improve math outcomes
- ✓ Tool to help own assessment in learning
- ✓ Free IT supported at school (should be used in conjunction with school)
- ✓ Teacher education calls on this topic. It is supported with questions, games & videos. ID's are an area of concern with students. It allows parents to have access & notifications
- ✓ Aid is provided for students, parents & teachers.

Presentation Highlights

- ✓ Ready-made questions from curriculum. Report back to teacher (number of tries & results, etc.). Results where a problem is identified gets added into a group learning format of a game show
- ✓ Kids get a medal if they complete 90% of questions
- ✓ It can be used from grades K-10
- ✓ You can upload your work teacher review
- ✓ Diagnostics are immediate
- ✓ If ongoing issues, students will be sent a video to explain the component & questions
- ✓ Testing is done the traditional way. Teaching is the EQAO test
- ✓ It allows teachers to hone in on a problem topic or struggling student

Key Points That Resonated

- ✓ Large number scored higher makes with Knowledgehook
- ✓ High school math is 110hrs. Provincial standard is 70%
- ✓ Not a tutoring tool without it being supported with a teacher. It's an insight on students for teachers targeting areas

SKETCHNOTING

Presented by Royan & Yumi Lee

Notes prepared by Jordan Jackson

Main Message within the Session

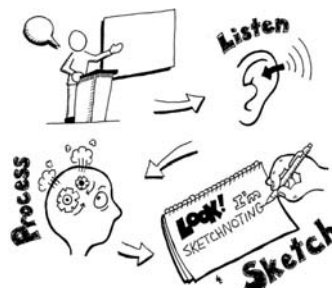
- ✓ Our society is made up of visual learners now
- ✓ How to turn complex ideas into visual clarity
- ✓ Why sketchnoting?
 - Make things visible to ourselves/others
 - Maintain a record of things
 - Make messages more captivating, engaging & far reaching
- ✓ It's about thinking & communicating vs being creatively perfect

Presentation Highlights

- ✓ Lots of hands on practice and examples
- ✓ The more you practice, the less you think about drawing and more about the message you want to convey

Key Points That Resonated

- ✓ "I can turn nothing into something"
- ✓ Will you be the one person in a room that can express your ideas visually?



SAFETALK & PROMOTING MENTAL WELLNESS

Presented by Lisa Mulvihill & Melissa Isherwood

Notes prepared by Alison Christiansen

Main Message within the Session

- ✓ The safeTALK message: Help trainee helpers provide support by connecting individuals with life-saving interventions
- ✓ Create suicide alert communities
- ✓ Mental wellness
- ✓ What things regularly impact mental wellness
- ✓ Eating, sleeping & nutrition affect anxiety levels
- ✓ When to be concerned
- ✓ Community resources: Front door, KW Counselling, Family Counselling Centre Cambridge & North Dumfries

Presentation Highlights

- ✓ Video about suicide & examples of training they provide
- ✓ Suicide prevention council in our region (making us aware)
- ✓ 5 trained parents/guardians pair up with WRDSB trainer & go into communities to train in safeTALK training sessions.
- ✓ 20% of kids require mental wellness support, but only 5% get it
- ✓ Tips & Tricks: transition into independence progress, S.O.D.A.S, role play, anxiety, eating/sleeping, how to communicate
- ✓ Foods that reduce anxiety & sleeping tips (see attachments)
- ✓ Things to watch for (change in behaviour, etc.)

Key Points That Resonated

- ✓ Suicide is the second leading cause of death in youth.
- ✓ Role play: Kids text so much. Things are considered 'normal' such as phone calls can be challenging to kids as they have limited exposure so practice situations (Reduces anxiety, outcomes will be better, build confidence, etc.)
- ✓ Kids aren't getting sleep/eating requirements. Eating lunch in high school isn't cool
- ✓ As parents we want to protect our kids, but they learn resilience from failure
- ✓ Thusdays 12:00pm-6:00pm, KW Counselling has walk-in clinics. No appointment necessary.
- ✓ Websites: Teenmentalhealth.org or AnxietyBC.ca

Eating and Anxiety

What you eat and drink can have an effect on your anxiety level. Some foods and beverages have a chemical makeup that can cause you to feel more anxious. Some foods and beverages have a chemical makeup that can help you to lower your anxiety.

For you to know

Everyone's body is a little different from everyone else's. We each have a unique chemical makeup that reacts with the chemicals in everything we ingest. A number of substances have been linked to increased anxiety in many people. Some of these are caffeine, refined white sugar, refined white flour, alcohol, and some artificial sweeteners. A number of other substances have been linked to keeping anxiety low. Some of these are B-complex vitamins (such as niacin, thiamin, riboflavin, B-6, B-12, biotin, pantothenic acid, and folic acid), calcium, magnesium, omega-3 fatty acids, and complex carbohydrates.

You may be aware of ingesting some of these substances. When you sprinkle sugar on your cereal, you know you are eating sugar. Other substances have unfamiliar names and are not so obvious. Most people do not know when they are ingesting folic acid. To be fully aware of everything you are putting into your body, you may have to read the labels on the packages of the foods you eat

Eating and Anxiety

Some of the more common foods that contain these substances are listed below.

Substances that may *raise* your anxiety level and foods they are found in:

Caffeine: coffee, tea, chocolate, soda

Refined white sugar: non-diet soda, candy, cookies, cakes, ice cream, other desserts, sugar-coated cereals

Refined white flour: white bread and rolls, hamburger buns, spaghetti and other white pasta, pretzels

Alcohol: beer, wine, hard liquor

Artificial sweeteners: diet soda, most foods labeled "diet," many sugar-free products, cereals

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Substances that may *lower* your anxiety level and foods they are found in:

Niacin: chicken, turkey, wheat, brown rice, tuna

Thiamin: oats, wheat, pork, tuna, asparagus, sunflower seeds, white rice

Riboflavin: milk, yogurt, pork, avocados, mushrooms

Vitamin B-6: turkey, bananas, mangoes, sunflower seeds, sweet potatoes, tuna, pork

Vitamin B-12: beef, yogurt, tuna, crab, clams

Biotin: eggs, cheese, peanuts, cauliflower

Pantothenic acid: yogurt, avocados, salmon, sunflower seeds, mushrooms

Folic acid: turkey, oranges, peas, avocados, cabbage, broccoli, soybeans

Calcium: milk, yogurt, cheese, broccoli, spinach

Magnesium: spinach, almonds, avocados, sunflower seeds, Brazil nuts

Omega-3 fatty acids: tuna, salmon, sardines, walnuts, dark green leafy vegetables, soybeans

Complex carbohydrates: whole-grain breads, whole-grain cereals, whole-grain pasta, brown rice

Sleep

A number of new behaviours emerge during the adolescent years that can be explained as a result of brain changes. Although these new behaviours can often irritate and frustrate parents, they are completely normal in the context of teenage brain development.

One of the significant changes is related to sleep pattern alterations. Sleep patterns change during adolescence because the brain's circadian system (biological clock) changes. This change occurs as a result of a complex dynamic interaction between genetically determined brain development and the impact of the environment. During the teen years the usual childhood pattern of 'getting up early and going to bed early' changes, to a 'go to bed late and get up late' pattern. This natural change in circadian rhythm is accentuated by the teen environment. Teens are often awash in bright lights late at night, electronic and social stimulation that keep them active into the wee hours, and weekend gatherings that push well into early morning. These factors all converge to set a new go-to-sleep-late and wake-up-late cycle.

Teenagers stay up much later than younger children do, yet are still forced to wake up early on school days, their total sleep time is shorter on school days than on weekends, and this disrupts the rhythm of sleep. Teens need about 9 to 9 ½ hours of sleep every night, more than pre-teens need. Since they don't get anywhere near this amount during the week, many teenagers try to catch up on lost sleep on weekends, which typically annoys their parents. It is important to remember that teens sleep late on weekends because they are sleep deprived. They have created a huge sleep debt during the week and are paying it off on the weekend.

Sleep deprivation in adolescents can negatively affect the control of behavior, emotion and attention, and is a significant impediment to learning, attainment of social competence, concentration, focus and quality of life. School schedules are not based on the sleep/wake patterns of teenagers. Students in early morning classes report being less alert, more weary, and having to expend greater effort to pay attention. With all this sleep deprivation no wonder teens are late for class, sleepy at school, reluctant to be involved in extracurricular activities and cranky. And no wonder many parents find their teenagers to be a royal pain in the mornings!

Decreasing the amount of stimulating activities late at night (TV, phone, internet) is one way to recover lost sleep hours. Many of the social developments that might help correct the problem of adolescent sleep deprivation involve big social policy changes. These include: restructuring school curriculums and policy, to start school later and end school later, and creating a broader awareness of sleep deprivation among parents, teachers and physicians.

Changes in the brain during adolescence are just as important as bodily changes. Teens need their sleep, not only because it is part of their biological makeup, but because it benefits their social and academic performance, as well as their mental health.

How many hours of sleep do you need?

Average Sleep Needs

Age	Hours
Newborns (0-2 months)	12 - 18
Infants (3 months to 1 year)	14 - 15
Toddlers (1 to 3 years)	12 - 14
Preschoolers (3 to 5 years)	11 - 13
School-aged children (5 to 12 years)	10 - 11
Teens and preteens (12 to 18 years)	8.5 - 10
Adults (18+)	7.5 - 9

According to the National Institutes of Health, the average adult sleeps less than 7 hours per night. In today's fast-paced society, 6 or 7 hours of sleep may sound pretty good. In reality, it's a recipe for chronic sleep deprivation.

While sleep requirements vary slightly from person to person, most healthy adults need between 7.5 to 9 hours of sleep per night to function at their best. Children and teens need even more (see box at right). And despite the notion that our sleep needs decrease with age, older people still need at least 7.5 to 8 hours of sleep. Since older adults often have trouble sleeping this long at night, daytime naps can help fill in the gap.

How Much Sleep Do You Need?

SLEEP CYCLES & STAGES, LACK OF SLEEP, AND GETTING THE HOURS YOU NEED

When you're scrambling to meet the demands of modern life, cutting back on sleep can seem like the only answer. Who can afford to spend so much time sleeping? The truth is you can't afford not to. Even minimal sleep loss takes a toll on your mood, energy, and ability to handle stress. Learn how to determine your nightly sleep needs and what you can do to bounce back from chronic sleep loss and get on a healthy sleep schedule.

The power of sleep

Can't Sleep?

Read about insomnia causes, cures, and treatments

Many of us want to sleep as little as possible—or feel like we have to. There are so many things that seem more interesting or important than getting a few more hours of sleep. But just as exercise and nutrition are essential for optimal health and happiness, so is sleep. The quality of your sleep directly affects the quality of your waking life, including your mental sharpness, productivity, emotional balance, creativity, physical vitality, and even your weight. No other activity delivers so many benefits with so little effort!

Understanding sleep

Sleep isn't merely a time when your body and brain shut off. While you rest, your brain stays busy, overseeing a wide variety of biological maintenance tasks that keep you running in top condition and prepare you for the day ahead. Without enough hours of restorative sleep, you're like a car in need of an oil change. You won't be able to work, learn, create, and communicate at a level even close to your true potential. Regularly skimp on "service" and you're headed for a major mental and physical breakdown.

It's not just the number of hours in bed that is important—it's the quality of those hours of sleep. If you're giving yourself plenty of time for sleep, but you're still having trouble waking up in the morning or staying alert all day, you may not be spending enough time in the different stages of sleep—especially deep sleep and REM sleep. By understanding how the sleep cycles work and the factors that can lead to those cycles being disrupted, you'll be able to start getting both the quantity and the quality of sleep you need.

The sleep-wake cycle

Your internal 24-hour sleep-wake cycle, otherwise known as biological clock or circadian rhythm, is regulated by processes in the brain that respond to how long you've been awake and the changes between light and dark. At night, your body responds to the loss of daylight by producing melatonin, a hormone that makes you sleepy. During the day, sunlight triggers the brain to inhibit melatonin production so you feel awake and alert.

This sleep-wake cycle can be disrupted by factors such as nightshift work, traveling across time zones, or irregular sleeping patterns, leaving you feeling groggy, disoriented, and sleepy at inconvenient times. The production of melatonin can also be thrown off when you're deprived of sunlight during the day or exposed to too much artificial light at night, disrupting the sleep-wake cycle and preventing you from getting the sleep you need.

Myths and Facts about Sleep

Myth 1: Getting just 1 hour less sleep per night won't affect your daytime functioning. You may not be noticeably sleepy during the day. But even slightly less sleep can affect your ability to think properly and respond quickly, and compromise your cardiovascular health, energy balance, and ability to fight infections.

Myth 2: Your body adjusts quickly to different sleep schedules. Most people can reset their biological clock, but only by appropriately timed cues—and even then, by 1–2 hours per day at best. Consequently, it can take more than a week to adjust after traveling across several time zones or switching to the night shift.

Myth 3: Extra sleep at night can cure you of problems with excessive daytime fatigue. Not only is the quantity of sleep important but also the quality of sleep. Some people sleep 8 or 9 hours a night but don't feel well rested when they wake up because the quality of their sleep is poor.

Myth 4: You can make up for lost sleep during the week by sleeping more on the weekends. Although this sleeping pattern will help relieve part of a sleep debt, it will not completely make up for the lack of sleep. Furthermore, sleeping later on the weekends can affect your sleep-wake cycle so that it is much harder to go to sleep at the right time on Sunday nights and get up early on Monday mornings.

Adapted from: Your Guide to Healthy Sleep (PDF) The National Institutes of Health