

CHAMBER OF COMMERCE NEWSLETTER

Children's Mental Health – It's Everyone's Business

Mental health. Two words that we've all heard before, but opinions on what exactly it means can differ. Some see it as an absence of illness; others think of it as an integral component to feeling good overall. When it comes to mental health, thinking and talking about it can bring people a lot of power...so let's talk about why.

We know that overall health and well-being includes a person's mental health. Stress, lack of life balance, improper nutrition and sleep, and a range of other factors can impact one's mental health. Did you know that 1 in 5 children in Ontario suffer from a mental health problem? It's true. Moreover, only 1 in 6 children get the help they need. The annual loss to federal and provincial governments in failing to treat these children is \$1.9 BILLION. Young people facing mental illness are also at higher risk of dropping out of school. It's critical to recognize the importance of mental health and the impacts it has on our children, families, schools, work, businesses, healthcare, government, and community as a whole. What's important to remember is that early identification of issues is key, and that these issues can be diagnosed and treated just like any physical illness.

What stops a large number of people from getting help? One more word, and this is a powerful one: *stigma*. Unfortunately, stress, pressure, and oftentimes shame, prevent children from speaking with adults about their problems, and may also prevent children and adults from seeking the help that they need and deserve.

Chamber of Commerce members pride themselves on achieving a high standard of quality and community mindedness. Everyone can apply this standard to mental health in their own lives and their organizations: recognize mental health as an issue that is equally important to physical health; practice and promote a healthy life balance; learn about local services that are available; speak up when you hear stigma being spread; learn the facts about mental health; don't be ashamed to ask for help if you need it. You're worth it; our community's children are worth it.

For more information on children's mental health and services, please visit our websites:

www.childrenscentre.ca

www.heresthedeal.ca

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