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FAMILY - FOCUSED MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

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Mental Health Matters

Just like we know that taking care of our physical health is important to keep our bodies strong and healthy, it is also just as important to take care of our mental health (always and especially during a global pandemic!). Mental health includes our emotional, psychological and social well-being, which means it affects how we think, feel and act. It also helps determine how we handle stress in our lives, relate to others and what choices we make. When we experience good mental health, it doesn't mean we are always in a good mood, nor does it prevent the stresses of life from coming our way. But, it does help us cope with them so we can continue to engage productively in our everyday lives. Here are some tips and resources that might help support the mental health of you and your family.

- **COPING SKILLS ARE KEY:** if you're stressed out, you're definitely not alone (even [Elmo's dad](#) is feeling the crunch!). Check out [EASE](#) for fun, practical strategies to help kids manage anxiety and worries.
- **NAME IT, DON'T NUMB IT** Angry? Glad? Frustrated? Sad? It's all good. Naming, expressing and dealing with our emotions is important for our mental health. The Canadian Mental Health Association offers [practical advice, articles and information](#) to

help you #GetReal about how you really feel.

- **MOVEMENT IS MEDICINE** – for the body and our brains. Check out [10 ways to get active for 10 minutes](#) for some inspiration and if possible, encourage your child to get to school actively. Looking for more inspiration – check out this great [booklist](#) from our local libraries.
- **THE JOY OF EATING.** Nutritious meals and snacks can help keep us energized and ready to take on the day. Check out this delicious [buffet of meal ideas](#) and here's some helpful tips for [preserving food](#) from the First Nations Health Authority.
- **NATURALLY BOOST MOODS.** Time spent in nature is good for our souls and the rest of us. This [app](#) will take you to the best trails for you in our local area.
- **GET SOME QUALITY ZZZS:** easy to say, not so easy to do perhaps? These [tips](#) can help.

IN CRISIS? It can be frightening and overwhelming when you or someone you know is experiencing a mental health crisis. You're not alone and help is available. This [list](#) includes the many services available on Southern Vancouver Island that range from immediate crisis support to long-term services and support groups for those directly impacted by mental health issues, as well as their families and support systems.



TERRITORIAL ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Sooke School District acknowledges the traditional territories of the Coast Salish: T'Sou-ke Nation and Scia'new Nation and Nuu-chah-nulth: Pacheedaht Nation. We also recognize some of our schools reside on the traditional territory of the Esquimalt Nation and Songhees Nation.



COAST SALISH MOON:
SXÁN, EL – THE BULLHEAD
MOON Credit to: Claxton,
E. Senior & Elliot, J. (1993).
The Saanich Year

Using Conversations to Teach Resilience

Life's full of teachable moments we can harness to help children be better equipped to deal with life's challenges. This [article](#) includes a few practical examples that can help and reminds us "Resiliency develops at different rates for everyone. Our job as parents is to understand our children's unique strengths and weaknesses, and use that understanding in ways that are right for them. Don't give up, keep in mind that parenting takes a lot of patience, practice and perspective - and a lot of love and humour!"

Have fun in the great outdoors!

As the temperatures climb we're all keen to get outside more and have some fun. Enjoy – and while doing so here are a few key safety concerns and related tips to keep in mind.

- [Swimming, boating and water safety tips](#)
- [Six ways to be sun safe](#)
- [Wilderness safety tips](#)
- [10 Cycling tips](#)

The Power of Play

Our kids learn a lot through play – not to mention have a ton of fun! [Unstructured play](#) is child-led and allows children to follow their own interests and ideas without a defined purpose or outcome. It allows the child to explore boundaries, determine their own limits and is an important part of every child's healthy development. While some might think organized play is safer or better, this [infographic](#) shares some important facts (like the risks we might worry about are almost nil, especially compared to ALL the benefits of unstructured, self-directed play).



May 7th is National Child and Youth Mental Health Day

This day reminds us that having caring, connected conversations can have a big impact on the mental health of children and youth. To help celebrate – and support us all in connecting with our kids about mental health, [Family Smart](#) is hosting "Conversations About Mental Health: What it Sounds Like at Different Ages" – a conversation about how to connect with our kids between the ages of 0 to 18 years.



From our partners

Indigenous Sport, Physical Activity and Recreation Council (ISPARC)

Has launched a unique project to educate Indigenous children and youth about cultural activities, while also encouraging physical activity, through a [photography contest](#). Looking to get active? ISPARC is happy to once again be hosting [JigFit](#) and [Powwow Impact workouts](#).

KidSport of Greater Victoria

Continues to support families and schools so all kids can play. Looking for a grant to support your child? Details [here](#).

Boys and Girls Club

Have new sessions of their popular [parenting programs](#) (for those with tweens and/or teens) starting mid-May. For more info or to register, email lhoffman@bgcvc.org or call (250) 217-4929.

Island Sexual Health's

Community educator hosted an evening about helping address sexual health with middle school aged youth. Here's the [helpful handout](#).

GOT FEEDBACK FOR US?

Health is key to learning (and vice versa), so as part of the district's commitment to promoting health and learning for all, we'll share monthly bulletins full of tips and resources we hope you find helpful. Got feedback? We'd love to hear it! Email vrwhite@sd62.bc.ca



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VERSION
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bit.ly/3i2rvWq