

Dear Parents/Caregivers,

As part of our language and health curriculum, students are learning about the importance of developing a healthy mind and body. Recently, we have been working with a text entitled *Creepy Crawley* by Canadian author Steve Pitt.

There are many important themes in this text, one of which is the *stigma* that surrounds mental health issues. As teachers, parents, and caregivers, we can work together to help reduce this stigma and encourage our children to talk about mental health the same way they would about physical health.

Here are a few discussion starters that you may wish to use to open the lines of communication and reduce the stigma surrounding mental health.

- Ask what your child learned about mental health from reading *Creepy Crawley*.
- Ask your child to explain what the character of Doug Crawley told the audience about mental health at the school meeting.
- Ask your child what he or she would suggest if a friend felt sad, worried, angry, or frustrated. Encourage them to include ideas such as
 - **Tell** someone.
 - Use “feeling” words to express what is happening.
 - Use ways to relax, such as deep breathing, “going to your happy place,” singing a song, dancing, playing a game, etc.

These are just a few strategies that can help individuals to recognize, manage, and express feelings related to everyday mental health challenges.

Stigma concerning this issue has been around for decades. If we can help children (and adults) to realize that mental health is equally as important as their physical health, we have the potential to play a role in making it easy to talk about mental health.

Thanks for your help!

Sincerely,