

## TALKING ABOUT MENTAL HEALTH

June 2021

What a year it has been. We have all collectively had to manage an ever changing landscape. Pressures on families, children and youth have been significant as we work our way through this global pandemic. We have, together, focused ourselves on wellness skills throughout the year. It seems appropriate that our last month together our Umbrella theme is mastery. Mastery refers to the desire to become competent at a skill. In many ways we have all been working at this skill as we try and find ways to manage during this pandemic.

This month, I invite you to look back at the skills we collectively worked on this year: empathy, mindfulness, gratitude, self-compassion, healthy lifestyle, autonomy and intrinsic motivation. Have you had the opportunity to explore any of these skills? What, if anything, have you been able to add into your routine? If nothing, that is okay. Just the act of learning about new skills is the beginning of building.

How can you support your child with this? Explore the past themes together. Try and encourage your child to persevere when they are frustrated. Helping our children to desire to become competent at a task is what we naturally do much of the time. Consider helping your child learn to ride a bike. There may be falls. There may be scrapes and frustration. But there will also be that celebration when they first pedal away, wobbly at best, but independently. This is one example. There are many. It is important to remember that success is unique to each person's abilities.

Throughout the year, with the Umbrella Project, we were hoping to bring some connectedness, some shared experience, to an otherwise disconnected time. However you participated, thank you for joining the UGDSB staff and students on this wellness journey. We look forward to re-connecting and continuing this work together next year.

Jenny Marino  
Mental Health Lead, UGDSB

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