

# Mental Health and Wellness Newsletter

## Joyful Season

*"It is Christmas every time you let God love others through you . . . yes, it is Christmas every time you smile at your brother and offer him your hand."*

### Resilience, from FAITH, in Action!

Get ready for Wellness Week – Jan 22-26!

This week focuses on the Virtues and how they encourage resilience in our students. Look forward to exciting activities and wellness from a healthy, safe and caring, inclusive and mentally healthy framework framed through the Virtues.



### Why Move More? Especially in Cold Winter Months

Because we activate almost all of the body when we exercise, the whole body begins to adapt and improve. Moving more even changes the structure of the brain – making it capable of greater creativity, more focused concentration, and better problem solving. You will get stronger, faster and fitter. You'll also get smarter and happier. You will have more energy. More specifically, regular exercise increases the number and density of neurons in the brain. Your muscle fibres grow and gain mitochondria – the energy factories of the body. Your mental health will improve as exercise has been shown to be beneficial for depression, stress and anxiety. The daily stresses of life will have less of a drain on you and your resilience will increase. Adapted from Dr. Greg Wells – Principal Connections 2017 Volume 21 Issue 1



For more information, see the following links:

[45 essential vestibular activities](#)  
[Organized sports: A winning formula for children](#)  
[Examples of Flexible classrooms](#)  
[Ministry well-being document](#)

Sandy Brannan, Rick Klatt and Tammy Peplinski highlighted the importance of physical activity at the Bishop Smith and St. Joseph's High School REACH days.

### Mental Health Walk-in Clinics

**Phoenix & ATS** 613-735-2374 → Pembroke – Tue. 2-7 pm || Renfrew – Thurs. 2-7 pm || Arnprior – Wed. 2-7pm || Petawawa – Wed. 2-6 pm  
**Robbie Dean Centre** 613-433-4231 → Pembroke – Wed. 3-7pm | Renfrew – 3-7pm || Petawawa – Tues. 1-5 pm || Arnprior – Mon. 3-7 pm || Eganville – Mon. 1-5pm

### Video Games and Serve and Return

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As we come closer to enjoying the holidays, we often think of how best to use special time with our family.

Video games and screen time come with modest benefits in mood if used in moderation ([see screen time guidelines here](#)) but a decline in overall mood if overused. This is especially true if screen time is close to bedtime or interferes with sleep, getting enough face time with friends, or physical movement. Family, of course, is even more important than friends when it comes to mood, especially during the Christmas Season.

According to Dr. Nicole Sherren, the experiences that matter most during development are social and can be thought of like the '[serve and return](#)' action between two tennis players. Children reach out for interaction with adults through eye contact and conversations and adults must 'return the serve' by responding in a developmentally appropriate way to keep the interaction going. This back-and-forth social interaction allows children to practice key skills such as language and literacy, attention, working memory, emotional control, forming and maintaining relationships, and problem solving. It is astounding what children learn through face-to-face interaction.

This is different from video games. Although they can help children improve eye hand coordination, they not providing the same strong, architectural foundation for complex circuits to build on.

In fact, because children's brains are always developing, and developing most effectively when interacting with parents, relatives and teachers, the more we know about brain development, the more able we are to support our children. [Visit here](#) to get the brain training certificate!