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Strong Minds Strong Kids, Psychology Canada Celebrates 50 Years of Promoting Mental Well-being for Youth

50-Day Countdown to 50th Anniversary Calls for \$50 Donations and 50 Mental Health Strategies for Kids

TORONTO, September 25, 2024 – Strong Minds Strong Kids, Psychology Canada from The Psychology Foundation of Canada, a national charity dedicated to the mental health promotion of infants, children, and youth, is celebrating its 50th anniversary. For almost five decades, they have been using psychological science to nurture resilience with youth by giving them the tools needed to manage adversity and thrive. As the country recognizes a growing mental health crisis, they need help to continue this critical work.

Today's children and teens face unprecedented challenges—including the over-use of digital technology, shifting family dynamics, and the anxiety brought about by climate change. Early mental health support is essential for building resilience and developing strong coping skills, and Strong Minds Strong Kids, Psychology Canada has been at the forefront of these efforts.

"When we started 50 years ago, our vision was to ensure that psychological science could be used to make a real difference in the lives of Canadians," says Dr. Eric Jackman, Founding Chair of The Psychology Foundation of Canada. "What began as a small initiative has grown into a national movement, with our resilience-building programs now reaching millions of children across the country. Over the years, psychology has played a central role in driving our organization forward, guiding the development and delivery of evidence-based programs that empower youth to build resilience and manage the challenges they face today. We are proud of how far we've come and even more excited about the future as we continue to expand our impact."

As they approach their 50th anniversary, they are excited to announce their Growing Strong Minds Conference and Growth Gala, set to take place in just 50 days on November 14, 2024. In preparation for this milestone, they are launching a donation campaign, asking Canadians to donate \$50 in support of their crucial programs. These funds will directly support initiatives that help build resilience and prevent mental health issues in children and teens across the country.

"It is essential for us to help youth manage, learn, and grow from the many challenges they face. At Strong Minds Strong Kids, our mission has always been to nurture resilience through psychological science. This approach is needed more than ever to give youth the coping skills to overcome life's challenges and foster strong mental health now and into the future." Says Dr. Rebecca Pillai Riddell, Scientist, Clinical Psychologist, and Board Member of Strong Minds Strong Kids, Psychology Canada from The Psychology Foundation of Canada.

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Strong Minds Strong Kids, Psychology Canada

From The Psychology Foundation of Canada
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As part of their anniversary celebration, they are releasing a curated list of 50 psychology-based strategies designed to nurture resilience and promote mental and emotional well-being in youth. This resource is aimed at empowering youth and their parents/caregivers, educators, and other significant adults in a child's life with practical tools to support the mental wellness of the next generation.

About Strong Minds Strong Kids, Psychology Canada from The Psychology Foundation of Canada: Strong Minds Strong Kids, Psychology Canada is a national charity celebrating 50 years of using psychological science to benefit Canadians. Their mission is to help infants, children and youth build resilience so that all may thrive emotionally, socially and mentally. A small national staff, along with support from many volunteers, make it possible to develop and deliver several psychology-based programs and resources to local communities across Canada. The organization is led by a volunteer board of prominent psychologists, business and community leaders.

www.strongmindstrongkids.org

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Strong Minds make for Strong Kids

50 Mental Health Promotion Strategies for Infants, Children and Teens

For Babies & Toddlers:

1. **Sing Together:** Hold your baby, sing, and make eye contact to foster a loving bond.
2. **Respond with Care:** Comfort your baby when they cry. It builds trust and safety.
3. **Play Together:** Let your toddler explore everyday objects and follow their lead in play.
4. **Stay Calm:** Practice deep breathing to stay calm when your baby is upset.

For Young Children:

5. **Feeling Charades:** Act out emotions and guess them to build emotional awareness.
6. **Draw a Happy Place:** Encourage kids to draw their "happy place" and refer to it when stressed.
7. **Mindful Eating:** Have kids eat a favorite snack slowly, focusing on taste and texture.
8. **Dance Out Emotions:** Let kids create dances to express how different emotions feel.
9. **Mirror Emotions:** Make faces that show emotions and guess what they represent.
10. **Emotion Thermometer:** Help kids rate their emotions from 1 to 5 using a visual thermometer.
11. **What If Game:** Ask "What if" questions and brainstorm creative solutions to problems.
12. **Stress Stoplight:** Talk about stress like a stoplight from bad (red), okay (yellow), to good (green).
13. **Stretch & Reach:** Pretend to push clouds back into the sky as a stretching exercise.
14. **Belly Breathing:** Teach deep breathing to calm down when feeling stressed or angry.

For School-Age Children:

15. **Name Emotions:** Teach words for different emotions to help them communicate feelings.
16. **Gratitude Collage:** Create a collage of things they're grateful for.
17. **Finger Breathing:** Trace fingers while taking deep breaths to calm down.
18. **Animal Pack:** Imagine how animals deal with stress and how a "pack" can help.
19. **Focus Eyes:** Encourage them to focus their eyes on one spot to calm racing thoughts.
20. **Excitement Over Worry:** Shift nervousness into excitement by reframing the feeling.
21. **Inner Buddy vs. Bully:** Name their positive (buddy) and negative (bully) inner voices.
22. **Invisible String:** Write names of supportive people on notes to show their invisible support network.
23. **Daily Reflection:** Have them journal or draw about their day and how it made them feel.
24. **Calm Jar:** Create a jar of calming activity ideas to use when stressed.
25. **Mindful Walks:** Go for a walk and focus on what they see, hear, and smell to be present.

For Preteens:

26. **Active Play:** Encourage daily physical activity like skipping, running, or jumping.
27. **Recognize Stress:** Talk about how stress feels in their body.

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28. **Muscle Relaxation:** Practice tensing and relaxing muscles to release stress.
29. **Express Emotions:** Draw how they think their face looks when feeling different emotions.
30. **Quick Calming:** Brainstorm 9-second calming activities, like petting an animal or counting.
31. **Stress Plan:** Write down stressors and brainstorm ways to cope.
32. **Worry Box:** Create a box for storing written worries until they're ready to discuss them.
33. **Count to 10:** When emotions run high, encourage them to count to 10 before reacting.
34. **Happy Place:** Close eyes, breathe deeply, and imagine a calm, happy place.
35. **Creative Outlets:** Express feelings through art, music, or dancing.
36. **Growth Mindset:** Think about how they can improve, even in areas where they're skilled.
37. **Three Good Things:** Before bed, write down three positive things from their day.
38. **Best/Worst Outcomes:** Think about the best and worst possible outcomes of a situation.
39. **Practice Apologizing:** Reflect on times they've apologized and how it improved relationships.
40. **Stress Scale:** Ask them to rate their stress level from 1 (most stressed) to 10 (least stressed).
41. **5-4-3-2-1 Grounding:** Name 5 things they see, 4 things they feel, 3 sounds, 2 smells, and 1 taste.

For Teens:

42. **Positive Affirmations:** Write down 10 positive affirmations and refer to them when stressed.
43. **Stress Reflection:** Regularly reflect on signs of stress and how to manage them.
44. **Focus on Values:** Use their values to guide decisions and behaviors when overwhelmed.
45. **Create a Stress Kit:** Make a kit with items that help relieve stress.
46. **Laughter:** Watch something funny or spend time with people who make them laugh.
47. **Healthy Habits:** Encourage sleep, nutritious food, and regular physical activity.
48. **Journaling:** Write down thoughts and feelings to identify patterns.
49. **Relaxing Music:** Create a playlist of calming music or sounds.
50. **Get Organized:** Use to-do lists and calendars to stay on top of tasks and reduce stress.

About [Growing Strong Minds Conference](#): **November 14, 2024 Marriott Eaton Centre Toronto, 9:00 am - 4:00 pm EST**

The Growing Strong Minds Conference on November 14th offers a full day of inspiration, collaboration, and learning about youth mental health. Attendees will hear from leading psychologists and thought leaders, gaining insights into cutting-edge research and evidence-based strategies to help children build resilience. The event includes a buffet lunch for in-person participants and features a choice of 9 in-depth sessions covering various aspects of youth mental health. There are opportunities for networking with professionals and peers, and all attendees will receive a certificate of attendance and access to session recordings post-conference.

About [Growth Gala](#): **November 14, 2024 Marriott Eaton Centre Toronto, 5:30 pm – 9:30 pm EST**

The Growth Gala is a special dinner event celebrating 50 years of growth, innovation, and advancing mental health through psychology. This evening promises a perfect blend of fun and insight, featuring great food,

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drinks, live entertainment, and the exciting unveiling of groundbreaking findings from the first ever meta-analysis on mental health promotion. Guests will also have the chance to network with 250 distinguished leaders from business, academia, and childcare professions, making it a night of inspiration, collaboration, and connection.

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