



Supporting Youth Mental Health

Noticing

There is value in helping your students take time to stop and notice the good things happening, even if it is a challenging or uncertain time. You can also help your students to settle anxious feelings and return to the present moment by using grounding skills.

Ask your students:

- What are five things you see around you?
- What are four things you can touch or feel with your body (e.g. the chair on my back, feet on the floor, fingers on the table)?
- What are three things you hear (e.g. a car, the clock, humming of a vent)?
- What are two things you smell or taste (or like to smell and taste)?
- Ask them to take one mindful breath.

Youth can engage in a Noticing activity to regulate emotions and support positive mental health.

School Mental Health Ontario has additional stress management strategies at the following [link](#).



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Muscle Relaxation Exercises

Feeling anxious affects our bodies and minds. Muscle relaxation exercises can help us decompress and feel better in our brains. In addition, with so much time spent sitting in front of a computer during remote learning, we are not moving as much as we usually do in a typical school day.

Stretches and **Chair Exercises** are good ways to engage your muscles and support both physical and emotional well-being. They can also be facilitated with students both online and in-person. All of our bodies work in different ways. We know our own bodies best. You can adjust these activities however you need to make them work for you or your students.

Stretches

- Sit cross-legged or legs straight in front on a comfortable surface.
- Turn shoulders/upper body to the left and hold for 10 seconds
- Back to centre.
- Turn shoulders to the right, hold for 10 seconds.
- Back to centre.
- Reach arms in front as far as you can, hold 10 seconds.
- Reach to the sky, hold 10 seconds.
- Repeat twice.

Chair Exercises

- Put your hands behind your back, touching your elbows with your hands.
- Hold your hands in front of you (hold for 5 seconds), make fists, turn fists upwards (hold for 5 seconds), turn fists downwards (hold for 5). Bring your hands back down. Repeat 5 times.
- With your feet flat on the floor, raise your heels for 10 seconds, drop them back down. Repeat 3 times.
- Put your hands flat on the back of your head and bend your elbows. Turn your head left (hold for 5 seconds), turn your head to middle, turn your head to the right (hold for 5 seconds).
- Leg Extension: Straighten your leg in front, bring back down.

Additional activities can be found online in the [COVID-19 Youth Mental Health Resource Hub](#), sponsored by jack.org, School Mental Health Ontario and Kids Help Phone.

JEWISH HERITAGE MONTH

The Jewish-Canadian community is the fourth largest in the world after Israel, the U.S, and France. The first known settler of Jewish faith is believed to have arrived in 1732 as an employee of the Hudson's Bay Company. Others followed as British soldiers after Halifax was founded shortly thereafter. After the British defeated the French in Quebec, a Jewish community grew in Montreal with the first Synagogue created in 1768. As the decades advanced, so too did Jewish immigration as various crises and conflict throughout the world prompted many to seek a better life in Canada where they would become proud citizens.

In 2018, Canada officially declared May as Jewish Heritage Month to recognize the important contributions of Jewish Canadians in virtually every field including medicine, theatre, music, engineering, architecture, academia, politics, law, the arts and more. Among the very many notable names are those such as:

- Rosalie Abella, Supreme Court of Canada Justice
- Leonard Cohen, poet singer
- David Cronenberg, director
- Frank Gehry, internationally renowned architect
- Lorne Green, stage TV actor (Bonanza)
- Eugene Levy, actor comedian
- John C. Polanyi, Nobel winning chemist
- Jack Warner of Warner Bros films
- William Shatner, Actor (Star Trek)
- Johnny Wayne & Frank Shuster – comedy duo



We also recognize past and present episodes of anti-Semitism (anti-Jewish discrimination) in Canada. Click [here \(link 1\)](#) or [here \(link 2\)](#) for more information about anti-Semitism in Canada.



[Jewish Heritage in Canada – At a Glance](#) – Click [here](#) for 31 daily quick facts, one for each day of Jewish Heritage Month, that can be used with students.

For more information about Jewish Heritage, view the online [Jewish Heritage Guide](#), including major denominations, observances, rituals of the life cycle, core values, terms and other facts or the [Jewish Heritage Month Guidebook](#) from the Friends of Simon Wiesenthal Center for Holocaust Studies.



Eid-al-Fitr is the celebration feast that marks the end of the Muslim holy month of Ramadan. Eid is marked at the first sighting of the new moon in the 10th month of the Islamic calendar, sometime on or near May 12th this year. The celebration can last 2-3 days. It would be appropriate to say "Eid Mubarak" or "Happy Eid" to students who are celebrating this significant religious holiday.

Red Dress Day – May 5



May 5th is Red Dress Day, a day to raise awareness about Missing & Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls & 2 Spirited People. Indigenous women make up 16% of all female homicide victims, and 11% of missing women, even though Indigenous people make up 4.3% of the population of Canada. Indigenous women are three times more likely than non-Indigenous women to be victims of violence. On May 5 and every day, we advocate for change. Pictured is Indigenous Student Trustee, Amara Ruffo who chose to focus on Missing & Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls & 2 Spirited People in a self-esteem project she participated in.

Days of Significance

Asian Heritage Month

May 1-31, 2021

See page 3.

Jewish Heritage Month

May 1-31, 2021

See page 2.

Red Dress Day

May 5, 2021

See page 2.

Eid-al-Fitr

May 12, 2021

See page 2.

International Day Against Homophobia, Transphobia and Biphobia

May 17, 2021

This is a global celebration of sexual orientation and gender diversities.

World Day for Cultural Diversity for Dialogue and Development

May 21, 2021

The UN has designated this day as an opportunity to deepen our understanding of the values of cultural diversity and to learn to live together in harmony.

Waabigwani-giizis

Zaagibagaa-giizis

May 26, 2021

Flowering / Budding Moon

Buddha Day (Vesak or Visakha Puja)

May 26, 2021

This is a Buddhist festival that marks Gautama Buddha's birth, enlightenment and death. It falls on the day of the full moon in May.

World No Tobacco Day

May 31, 2021

Each year, the World Health Organization (WHO) designates this day to spread awareness about the risks of tobacco use and how we can make the world tobacco free.

ASIAN HERITAGE MONTH

Since 2002, Asian Heritage Month recognizes the history of Canadians of Asian descent and celebrates their contributions to the growth and prosperity of Canada.

Asia is the largest continent in the world both in terms of size and population. It includes people from many regions such as East Asia, South Asia, Central Asia, Southeast Asia and Western Asia (including the Middle East). Asian heritage is a rich heritage of diversity that represents many languages, ethnicities and religious traditions. People from these regions have immigrated to Canada over the past 200 years and have significantly contributed in the settlement, growth and development of Ontario and all of Canada. The people of this diverse community have contributed to every aspect of life in Canada including the arts, science, sport, business, and government.

In the 2019 ADSB Student Census & Well-Being Survey, 3.5% of students identified with an Asian heritage, including East Asian, Middle Eastern, South Asian and Southeast Asian.

What Can We Learn?

Like all cultures, Asian heritage is a diverse and ever-changing concept that has varied meanings to the different communities and generations. During Asian Heritage Month we are invited:

- To celebrate traditional as well as contemporary Asian-Canadian culture, which includes poetry, dances, sports, music and art;
- To learn about the many achievements and contributions of Canadians of the diverse Asian heritage that makes up our Canadian communities;
- To understand the historical journeys and ongoing struggles of diverse Asian communities;
- To recognize individual and institutional racism both past and present, that have impacted the lives of many groups; and
- To engage with students through lessons and discussions of prominent past events, current issues of racism and discrimination that continue to impact the many Asian communities living in Canada and to bear witness to the resistance and resilience of such groups.

It is important to recognize that Asian Canadian history is part of Canadian history and should not only be highlighted during this month but integrated throughout the school year.

Notable Canadians of Asian Descent

- Patrick Chan – World Champion figure skater
- Adrienne Clarkson – Governor-General of Canada
- Paul Kariya – NHL hockey player
- Sandra Oh - actress
- Dr. David Suzuki – scientist, environmental activist
- Dr. Teresa Tam – Canada’s Chief Public Health Officer

Additional information, including other notable Canadians of Asian descent can be found at the following [link](#).

Addressing Anti-Asian Racism and Anti-Semitism

The ADSB is committed to ensuring the physical and emotional safety and well-being of all students. As part of this commitment, all students, regardless of race, ancestry, place of origin, colour, ethnic origin, citizenship, creed, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, age, marital status, family status or disability, must feel safe, welcomed and accepted in our schools.

The COVID-19 pandemic has led to an increase in anti-Semitism and racist attitudes and behaviors towards people of Asian descent here in Ontario, as it has across Canada and the world. Acts of anti-Asian discrimination and anti-Semitism are unacceptable and cause harm to the health, well-being and safety of educators, students, families and communities. We can stand against hate fueled by misinformation and all forms of anti-Semitism and racism including anti-Asian racism. Some ways our communities can counter anti-Asian racism and anti-Semitism include:

- **Learn about Asian and Jewish Diversity** including the unique identities and cultures that have enriched Canadian society.
- **Challenge Stereotypes** and consider how they are rooted in the history of anti-Asian racism and anti-Semitism.
- **Show Solidarity** with Asian and Jewish communities in Canada (e.g. support local Asian or Jewish businesses)
- **Be an Ally** - Call out acts of racism and discrimination and actively support those victimized by anti-Asian racism and anti-Semitism.
- **Interrupt Unconscious Biases** and consider how our own preconceptions affect our behavior and decision-making.

SECONDARY TEACHERS – FREE STUDENT EVENT

The film, “*Personal Non Grata*” highlights Japanese diplomat Chiune Sugihara who issued visas to thousands of Jewish refugees from Lithuania during World War II to help them escape the Holocaust. In recognition of Jewish Heritage Month and Asian Heritage Month, the Friends of Simon Wiesenthal Center is offering an event for classes (e.g. CHC2D/2P or CHV2O). Teachers can register by emailing Melissa at mmikel@fswc.ca. With registration, secondary teachers will receive resources and:

- Online access to the 140 minutes film between May 17-19, 2021 at any time at your convenience with your class.
- Access to the live webinar event scheduled to take place on May 20, 2021 from 11:00 am to 12:15 pm.

Sources and Additional Information:

Click on the titles to access the links.

- [Canadian Encyclopedia – Asian Heritage Collection](#) (including articles, Timelines & Heritage Minute videos).
- [Government of Canada – Asian Heritage Month](#) (including articles, videos, posters)
- [Addressing Anti-Asian Racism – A Resource Guide for Educators](#)



Algoma District School Board Presents

An Evening with Kike Ojo-Thompson

Leadership and Equity



MONDAY, MAY 17 2021

7 PM - 8 PM

The Algoma District School Board invites you to join KOJO Institute for a 1-hour virtual Keynote regarding Leadership and Equity (including 20-minutes for Q&A). This interactive professional development will establish Equity as our compass - the direction and imperative for our decisions and strategies. Utilizing the frameworks of anti-racism, anti-oppression, anti-colonialism, and anti-Black racism, we can achieve the strategic directions we have set and see equitable outcomes for staff and students and our school communities.

Participants can expect the following outcomes:

- Shared understanding about what equity is, how it is achieved, what it requires organizationally, and its relationship to frameworks such as Diversity and Inclusion*
- Interrogation of existing commitments to equity, what success will look like, and what will be required for their realization*
- Consideration of existing structural enablers and impediments to achieving equitable outcomes*
- Clarity regarding leadership and what posture and practices will enable equitable outcomes*

Register [here!](#)



Kike Ojo-Thompson is renowned as one of Canada's foremost experts and thought leaders on equity, diversity, and inclusion. As the founder and principal consultant of KOJO Institute, she has guided public and private organizations alike towards more equitable cultures and outcomes with her signature balance of tact and honesty. Amongst Ojo-Thompson's notable clients are Canada's largest school board, the nation's biggest grocery retailer, and public health organizations on both sides of the Canada-US border. Prior to leading KOJO Institute full time, Ojo-Thompson was the project lead for One Vision One Voice, a first-of-its-kind initiative addressing anti-Black racism in the child welfare system, and the senior facilitator for Ontario's carding review. Ojo-Thompson has lent her voice to provincial and national media platforms, including TVO, the Globe & Mail, CBC, the Toronto Star, and the Social TV. Her meaningful contributions to equity in Canada have been recognized by Women's Health in Women's Hands (2019); 100 Accomplished Black Canadian Women (2018); and Robert Small's 25th anniversary Legacy Poster (2019).