

**Sara Riel Inc. and Stigma-Free Society Partnership
Resources and Tools for Mental Health Education in Winnipeg Schools
Monday, October 4, 2021**

Winnipeg, MB – Sara Riel Inc. provides community-based support to persons who experience issues with mental illness or mental health challenges including substance use. They focus on COMPASSION, RESPECT, and RECOVERY for all their clients. They are highly valued in the Winnipeg community for the services they provide. The reputable organization has teamed up with a Vancouver-based Charity named the Stigma-Free Society whose mission is to bring awareness of stigmas with a focus on mental health and promote understanding and acceptance with their programming.

The values of these organizations perfectly align and together they will work to eliminate mental health-related stigma in their communities and provide support to teachers and students in the *Winnipeg School Division*. Sara Riel has partnered with the Winnipeg School Division, the University of Manitoba and is bringing mental health education and support to employees in the education sector who may be struggling with their mental health. In partnership, the Stigma-Free Society is thrilled about their cross-provincial expansion into Manitoba, and are now able to support young people in Winnipeg through their [Student Mental Health Toolkit](#) and [Virtual Stigma-Free School Program](#).

Sara Riel will deliver modules to Winnipeg School Division staff, who throughout the Pandemic have been meeting overwhelming challenges. These modules will include information on self-care, burn-out, mindfulness and stress fatigue. For over 43 years, Sara Riel has been providing support to individuals with counselling, employment services, wrap around housing support and peer support services. Parents who have mental health and addictions challenges can access Sara Riel to obtain services.

“Sara Riel will support everyone from bus drivers to teachers to administrators by arming them with mental health PPE in the education sector. In addition, Sara Riel can provide support to parents through our Sara Riel Peer Support groups or through our services,” stated Tara Snider, Executive Director of Sara Riel. “We are happy to partner with the Stigma Free Society to provide comprehensive support to everyone in the education sector.”

The *Student Mental Health Toolkit* program is made for youth, educators, school counsellors, and parents/guardians, who want to teach and promote mental wellness for Grades 4-7 and 8-12. It contains Mental Wellness Lesson Plans, Diverse ability/Disabilities and Inclusion section, engaging and educational animated videos, comics, specialized section devoted to Parents, Guardians and Caregivers, and much more.

A core part of the *Student Mental Health Toolkit* program is the *Virtual Stigma-Free School Program* that includes documentary-style videos about mental health and the elimination of stigma featuring personal stories. Educators can welcome Virtual Stigma-Free Presenters for LIVE online presentations with Stigma-Free presenters with lived experience of mental illness and stigma and gain valuable mental health knowledge.

“We are in a time where mental health education is crucial and needs to be integrated into each classroom, and we are extremely excited to bring our student mental health programming to Winnipeg schools.” says Paquette.

This is a crucial time for Educators and students to be supported in their mental health and Sara Riel Inc. and the Stigma-Free Society are thrilled to be working together to bring help and hope for those dealing with mental health issues in the Winnipeg School Division.

For more information:

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