

Monday, July 30, 2018

In my capacity as Program Chief and Medical Director of Mental Health, Trillium Health Partners and Associate Professor of Psychiatry, University of Toronto, it is my pleasure to produce this letter of support to the Team Unbreakable program. We are in full support of Team Unbreakable and its goals of reducing the stigma of youth mental illness, building awareness of the issues, and in promoting the positive aspects of physical health on mental well-being.

Exercise seems to have an effect on certain chemicals in the brain, like dopamine and serotonin. Brain cells use these chemicals to communicate with each other, so they affect our mood and thinking. We know that moderate exercise can stimulate these and other chemicals in the brain called “brain derived neurotrophic factors”. These help new brain cells to grow and develop. In so doing, exercise does seem to significantly reduce harmful changes in the brain caused by stress. Of course, those benefits are on top of the well-established fact that exercise is an advanced adaptive coping strategy for stress in and of itself.

The Team Unbreakable school run programs, community- and hospital-based run programs are based on the teen run therapy program pioneered by Dan McGann (MSW) here at Trillium Health Partners in Mississauga. Through this activity Team Unbreakable aims to prevent youth suicide through awareness, reducing stigma and improving wellness through physical activity.

We are proud to partner with you in this worthy goal.

Sincerely,



Ian Dawe, MHSc, MD, FRCP(C)
Program Chief and Medical Director, Mental Health
Trillium Health Partners