

FALL 2019

STUDENT ASSISTANCE COUNSELOR NEWSLETTER

CONTACT INFORMATION

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It's been said that knowledge is power. Our goal in this newsletter is to add to your knowledge, increase awareness, communicate strategies and resources, and bring to light some "food for thought," on issues that affect teenagers, their families, and our community within the scope of the high school experience. This S.A.C.newsletter will be published four times a year, building on and adding to communication within the Ramapo Indian Hills School District on such topics as underage drinking, stress and anxiety and other personal concerns, positive parenting strategies and coping mechanisms, to name a few. Our primary purpose will be to raise awareness, increase communication, and offer education and support in our roles as Student Assistance Counselors at RIH. We hope you find each issue to be helpful and informative.

Please feel free to contact us with questions or concerns, or if you have an idea for a particular topic you feel would be appropriate for us to address in this forum.

We hope you enjoy this initial issue, and wish everyone a wonderful 2019 – 2020 school year!

Andrea Saladino & Tom Kersting



A New Stress-Less School Year

Summer has come and gone and we are all transitioning to cooler, crisper weather, changing colors and a new school year. A lot of attention is placed on students' classes and schoolwork as we strive to help our kids reach their full potential. Anxiety can often be a byproduct. If your teen is feeling anxiety as we roll into the new school year there is plenty they can do to combat it.

Here are 5 tips to help your child tackle anxiety head-on:

Go for a hike: The best medicine for stress and anxiety is physical movement. You might not know this but cardiovascular exercise is more effective for treating anxiety than prescription medication. Get your teen outside and get them moving. Better yet, make it a family affair.

Have dinner together: In today's busy, fast-paced world few families sit together for dinner. Studies show that families who have dinner together most nights of the week, without distractions, fair better. In fact, the children in those families are less likely to suffer from mental health issues, less likely to get involved in drugs or alcohol and more likely to excel in school. Bottom line-the conversations we have with our children around the dinner table play an important role in their mental well-being.

Unplug during car rides: If you drive your son or daughter to school make sure you they are talking with you instead of being distracted by their phone. The 5-minute car rides are fertile ground for parent/child communication and connection, and for your child's mental and emotional well-being. If your child has the ear buds in and phone out during those 5-minute drives back-and forth to school, you're losing thirty hours of quality communication time with your child over the course of the school year.

Get to sleep: More teens than ever are sleep deprived. A lot of teenagers go to sleep between 12:00 and 3:00 AM most nights of the school week. Many parents don't know this because teens have a hard-time powering down their devices. Find a central location for devices and get your teen into the habit of getting 8 or 9 hours of sleep each night. A sleep-deprived child is an anxious child.

Create a homework routine: Have you ever heard the expression, 'there is no better time than now'? Well, when it comes to homework there's no better time than now. Many teens put-off homework until later in the evening. Procrastination leads to anxiety. Get your teen into the habit of doing their homework first.

THE ROLE OF THE S.A.C.

The Student Assistance Counselor (S.A.C.) is the primary counseling and intervention specialist in most New Jersey schools. The S.A.C. is trained to assist students in coping with emotional, psychological, or behavioral issues as they relate to or affect school. The S.A.C. provides in-school assessment, support, crisis intervention, counseling and referral services to students who may be experiencing personal, family, school and/or peer difficulties. The goal is to support the student and prevent personal difficulties from interfering with their success in school. In addition, the S.A.C. at each high school serves as that school's Anti-Bullying Specialist, sits on the I & RS/504 Committee, and facilitates the Heroes & Cool Kids mentoring program in the district. Counseling services are confidential, and students may self-refer, be referred by parents, teachers, guidance counselors, administrators, school nurses or friends.



HELPFUL HOTLINES

2ND FLOOR YOUTH HOTLINE – 1-888-222-2228

PSYCHIATRIC EMERGENCY SCREENING PROGRAM – 201-262-HELP(4357)

BERGEN COUNTY DIVISION OF FAMILY GUIDANCE – 201-336-7350