



# PORTSMOUTH ABBEY SCHOOL



March 31, 2020

Dear Parents,

I hope that you are all managing well during this unprecedented change in our lifestyles as many of you work from home and are simultaneously encouraging your children as they begin the transition to distance learning. Additionally, I know that many of our Portsmouth Abbey School parents work either directly or in ancillary roles in healthcare fields and I want to personally thank you for your efforts in caring for sick patients, their families, and the larger community requiring so much support during the COVID-19 pandemic.

As we work to provide ongoing interactions for students via distance learning, we want to be sure that the School is also offering the opportunity for any students who are struggling to receive ongoing mental health support. We know that our students are dealing with losses of many kinds at this time to include: lack of face-to-face interpersonal connections with friends, as well as unexpected disruption in plans for sports, extracurricular activities, and social events. These changes will be experienced differently by students dependent upon individual circumstances, personality, and coping skills.

Both of the School's counselors/psychologists are able to offer telehealth sessions via Zoom, Skype, FaceTime, or telephone call. Dr. Anne Davidge and Dr. Norm Weitzberg want to offer this opportunity to all students, whether they have previously established client relationships that would have been ongoing during the spring term, or for those students who may never have felt the need to talk to a counselor in the past, but might want to connect during this difficult time. Counseling sessions can provide support in the areas of anxiety, stress, depression, family dynamics, academic organization, and development of positive coping skills. A separate email will be sent to students offering this service which will begin next week. Initially, Dr. Davidge will be available for sessions on Tuesday, April 7th between the hours of 2pm to 6pm and Dr. Weitzberg will be available on Thursday, April 9th from 3pm to 7pm. Hours thereafter will be determined and expanded as needed based on demand. Scheduling of sessions will be coordinated through the Infirmary and students will be asked to email appointment requests to me at [cbrown@portsmouthabbey.org](mailto:cbrown@portsmouthabbey.org). Please note that separate appointment times can be coordinated for international students who may be restricted in availability due to time zone issues.

Additionally, mental health support and information can be found at the following trusted sources. I would encourage you and your children to use these websites, and as always, contact your primary care provider

by phone if you have questions about specific resources available in your home communities.

Centers for Disease Control (CDC) Stress and Coping during COVID-19:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/daily-life-coping/managing-stress-anxiety.html>

National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) COVID-19 Resource and Information Guide:

<https://www.nami.org/getattachment/About-NAMI/NAMI-News/2020/NAMI-Updates-on-the-Coronavirus/COVID-19-Updated-Guide-1.pdf>

NAMI Finding Mental Health Support (information for all U.S. States)

<https://www.nami.org/find-support/living-with-a-mental-health-condition/finding-a-mental-health-professional>

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) Disaster Distress Helpline:

<https://www.samhsa.gov/find-help/disaster-distress-helpline>

Suicide Prevention Lifeline:

<https://suicidepreventionlifeline.org/>

Please feel free to contact me at any time should you require additional information, or have any questions or concerns. I look forward to hearing from you and encourage you to stay safe and follow all of the social distancing guidelines in place in your home communities.

Best,

Celia C. Brown, MS, RN, CSNT  
Director of Medical Services



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