



Cooped up in COVIDland



A mental health presentation and
panel discussion with the STA
counseling department

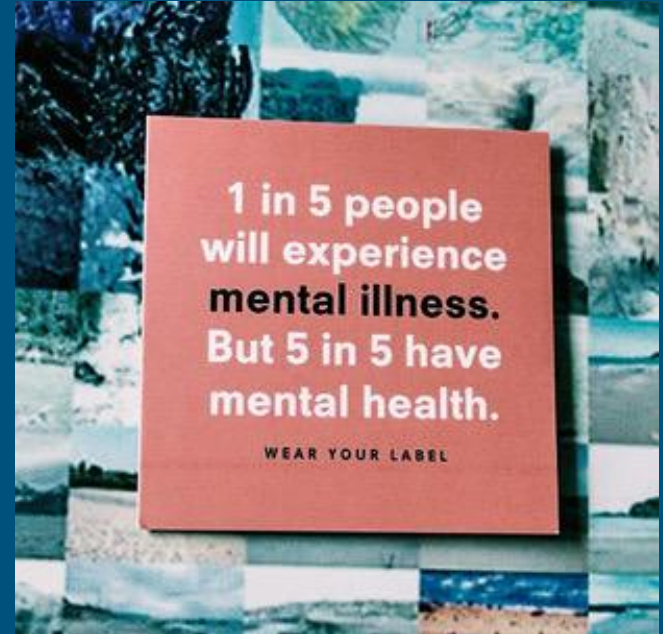


Who We Are:



Mental Health is for everyone

-
- What is happening for you right now? (question from first presentation)
 - What is one surprising lesson you have learned or revelation you have discovered while in quarantine?
 - What went well today?



Today's Format

- **Brief presentation**

- Signs of depression and anxiety - Missy
- Grief and loss - Jake
- Routines - Jake
- Self care - Justin
- Exercise and Nutrition - Justin
- Sleep - Tom
- Communication - Missy
- Screen time - Tom
- Resources

- **Question & Answers**

- Use the chat feature to submit questions

Depression and Anxiety

Men and women experience many of the same symptoms of depression like feeling extremely tired, **hopeless** and empty inside. Having difficulty concentrating and difficulty sleeping or sleeping too much, change in eating and weight, and not getting pleasure from activities usually enjoyed are also possible shared symptoms.

Commonly Overlooked Signs of Depression in Boys/Men:

- **Physical Pain**-backaches, headaches, overall aches and pains and digestive problems that do not subside with normal treatment
- **Anger/Irritability**-feeling on edge, short tempered, sensitive to feedback, loss of sense of humor or more aggressive than usual
- **Isolation**-withdrawing from family and friends physically and emotionally
- **High Risk Behavior**-driving recklessly, self-medicating with drugs/alcohol or pursuing dangerous adventures

Stress vs. Anxiety: What's the Difference?

Stress is generally a response to an **External** cause like making a tight deadline or having an argument with a friend or family member that subsides once the situation has passed or been resolved.

Anxiety is **Internal** in origin and is often triggered by stress. Anxiety is commonly defined as a persistent feeling of apprehension or dread that is present in situations that are not actually threatening and persists even after the concern or stressor has passed.

Symptoms like uneasiness, muscle tension, headaches, irritability, loss of sleep, difficulty in making decisions, repetitive thoughts, avoidance, loss of confidence, racing heartbeat, sweating, nausea and overuse of caffeine or alcohol can be experienced with both stress and anxiety. The difference involves intensity, frequency, and duration of symptoms and if they subside when the stressor(s) do.

For Both Depression & Anxiety - INTENSITY-FREQUENCY-DURATION-SITUATION are considered when assessing what falls into common life stressors and reactions and what constitutes the need for further assessment and possible treatment.

Grief and loss

Rites of passage have all but vanished, however they still mark important milestones on the journey through adolescence.

The loss of normalcy and these major life events is causing many students to feel an overwhelming sense of grief.

The feel cheated and parents want to help and “fix” things.

While we cannot fix things, there are some things you can do to help

Grief and loss

- Acknowledge their loss
 - Life experience informs perspective.
- Name their feelings
 - “Name it to tame it”
 - Frustrated can mean any number of things. Work to specify.
 - Keep focus on present not imagined futures
- Talk to them about grief and its stages.
 - Denial, Anger, Bargaining, Depression, Acceptance
- Help them find meaning.
 - Comes from the light we find in dark times.

Routines

With a daily routine to stick to, students will have the structure they crave.

- Things to do every day:
 - Wake up at the same time (before 9:00 am) every day to get into a routine.
 - Check email and Unified Classroom to start each morning.
 - Keep an updated planner to keep track of assignments and due dates.
 - Make a note of any live classes you might have that day.
 - Eat lunch at the same time to keep structure.
 - Exercise.
 - Have questions about school? Email teachers or counselors. Ask for help!
 - Practice gratitude. Name three things you are thankful for each day.
 - Go to bed at a reasonable time.

Supporting vs. Enabling

If you always do what you've always done, you will always get what you've always got. -Steven Hayes

Key Questions: What are your sons capable of doing? What is life asking of your sons right now?

Enabling looks like:

- allowing your son to avoid uncomfortable situations
- speaking on your son's behalf versus letting him learn to express his own thoughts and feelings
- inconsistently enforcing house rules due to feeling bad about the Covid 19 Distance Learning struggles and/or being afraid your son will get mad, shut down or not like you
- protecting your son from the natural consequences of his actions

Supporting vs. Enabling Cont.

— You can't change the beginning, but you can start where you are and change the ending. - C.S Lewis

Supporting looks like:

- asking your son each day (or the night before) “What is your plan for today?”
- providing simple human comforts that bring down stress and helps your son push through strong emotions-being present with your son and not feeling for him
- modeling healthy coping strategies for handling frustration, anger, disappointment and worry-engaging in non-judgemental listening and hmmm...
- providing structure and consistency at home with rules and schedules and discuss house rules in calm times so you are not making them up as needed

Self Care

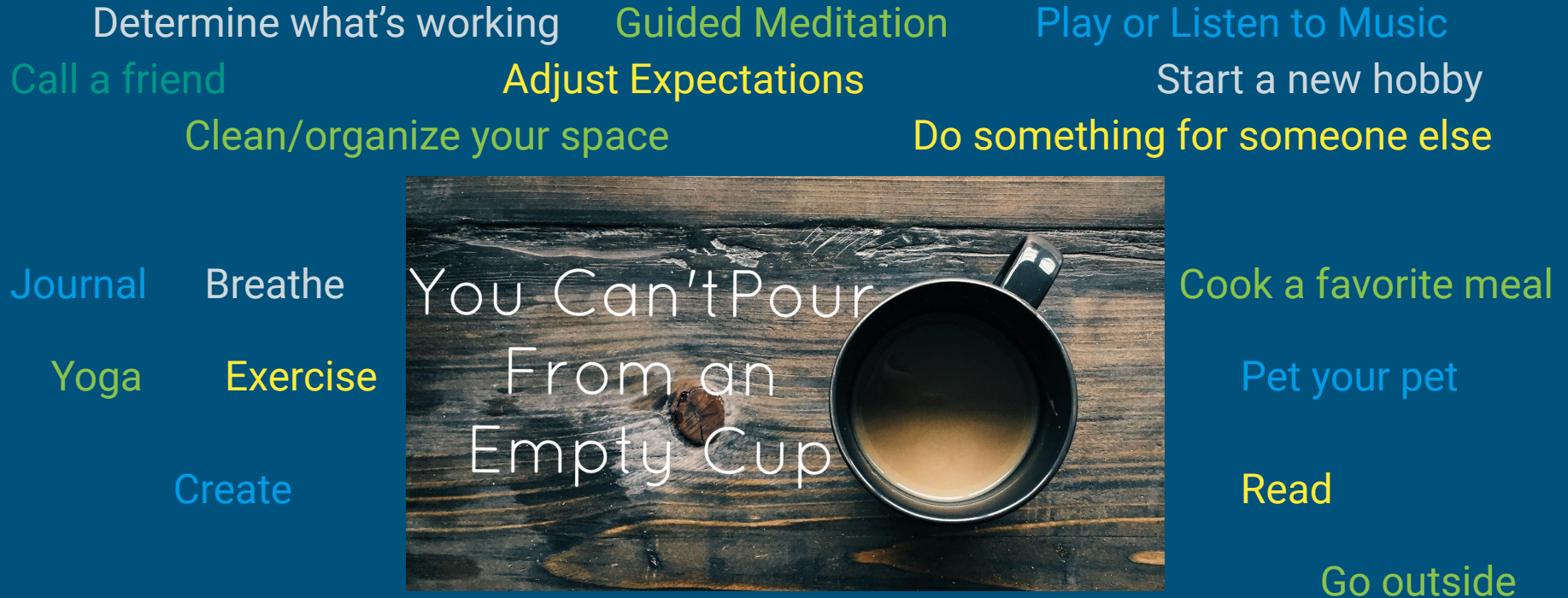
The Many Faces of Self-Care

With the COVID-19 outbreak playing out in front of us on the news and social media, it's easy for anxiety to set in.

Remember to give yourself a break, and give your brain a chance to process emotions and reset.



Self Care



Determine what's working

Guided Meditation

Play or Listen to Music

Call a friend

Adjust Expectations

Start a new hobby

Clean/organize your space

Do something for someone else

Journal

Breathe

You Can't Pour
From an
Empty Cup

Cook a favorite meal

Yoga

Exercise

Pet your pet

Create

Read

Go outside

Exercise and Nutrition

Good physical health promotes good mental
— health

- Boost your mood, fight off illness, improve sleep, increase mental performance
- 2.5 hours/week moderate intensity aerobic activity or 75 minutes high intensity
- Walk, stretch, TV commercial workouts, online classes
- Think about how you're fueling your body



Exercise
is Medicine®

Sleep



Sleep

● Importance of Sleep

- Teens need about 9 hours a night; 70% are sleep deprived. Is this normal?.
- Vicious Cycle: Mood effects sleep, sleep impacts mood.

● When we don't get enough sleep

- Concentration decreases
- Irritability, emotional regulation
- Problem Solving

Consequence

Overuse of caffeine and nicotine
Relationship issues
Managing time, quality of work

● Common Sleep Problems

- Difficulty getting to sleep.
- Waking in the middle of the night, waking early not falling back to sleep.
- Get to bed late, loss of sleep,, more napping, repeat.
- Using screens to cope/avoid/socialize.
- Turkeys roosting outside bedroom window.

How can we get enough sleep?

- Can we force them?

- Younger kids we can insist, middle school maybe, high school not so easy.
- Unlikely to change unless they recognized the benefit.
- Consistency is key, even on the weekends.

- Routines

- Regular bedtime: night before preparing for next day, tougher now.
- Bed is for sleeping.
- Screens off at least an hour before bed (blue blocker setting after 7).
- Limit snacking and certainly energy drinks/caffeine sources.
- Can't control it all, have, reasonable expectations. Parents are the model.

- Techniques

- Calming activities: reading, quiet music, to do lists
- Mindfulness apps, breathing techniques, have to find what works for the individual.

Communication

What is a Family Council Meeting?

You don't need to attend every battle you are invited to.

Mirror-Choice Technique

Wipe the Slate Clean

Intensive Togetherness-"How can I miss you when you won't go away?"

This is what you need to know about me today...

Screens



Screens are more important than ever.

- Why do we use them so much?

- Need it for schoolwork.
- Staying connected with friends.
- Coping and taking our mind off daily stresses.
- Sense of control.

- When is it too much?

- Not handling daily tasks.
- Disrupting sleep.
- Creates arguments at home.
- In general, when they are not attending to self-care (eat, sleep, exercise, family).

- This does not mean it is an addiction, may mean time to negotiate.

Screen Time

● Negotiating screen time.

- Start with empathy.
- Keep a schedule. You can play until you get a driver's license!
- Negotiate a plan, stick to the plan. Expect increased complaining initially.
- They need to learn to regulate, you can't control everything.

● What to do.

- Model good use of screens.
- Extra time as a bonus for ???.
- Have reasonable expectations for yourself and kids. Goal: healthy relation with screens.

● What to avoid.

- Linking screen time with homework, this could easily backfire.
- Setting rigid rules.

● Think of the positives

- Social connections, sense of control, preparation for the future.

Resources

[STA Counseling videos and resources](#)

[Reduce the stress of homeschooling](#)

[35 Self Care Tips](#)

[Help Teens Get More Sleep | Teenage Sleeping Habits](#)

[100 Ways to Sleep Better Every Night - How to Go to Sleep](#)

[Screen Time During the Coronavirus Crisis](#)

[NY Times Exercise Resources](#)

[Headsupguys.org](#)

[Childmind.org](#)

Additional Resources



SAINT THOMAS ACADEMY TALKING POINTS



COACH & PARENT TALKING POINTS FOR SPRING ATHLETES

Brought to you by the Saint Thomas Academy Athletic Department and School Counselors

VIDEO LINK: *Dealing with Disappointment*

The COVID-19 global pandemic has impacted us all, and with the cancellation of the spring athletic season by the Minnesota State High School League (MSHSL) it has become a very real and disappointing time for seniors especially. In the midst of social distancing, our student-athletes are certainly in the midst of difficult times. They are grieving the loss of camaraderie and community that comes with their sport.

So, what can we do? Allow athletes to be upset. An essential part of developing emotional maturity involves feeling bad, identifying and understanding the emotions, and learning to express those unpleasant emotions in healthy ways. Be empathetic and really listen to and reflect back their feelings. Don't try to solve the problem, there isn't really a solution right now. Allow your athlete to go through the five stages of grief (denial, anger, bargaining, depression, and acceptance). Over time, as the negative emotions begin to fade, refocus on the positives of athletics, the lessons learned, and how you can give back.

TALKING POINTS:

Maintain virtual communication with friends, family, and teammates
Balance your news intake - stay informed, but know when to take a break
Exercise is medicine - it helps fight stress and illness
Monitor your mental and emotional health
Talk it out - identify who you can trust and process the feelings you're experiencing
Consider how you can still engage your sport - training, mental performance, coaching
Remember your "why" - reflect on your reason for competing and where that can transfer
Establish a daily routine
Be a positive role model for everyone around you

ACTION ITEMS:

- Hand write letters to seniors
- Get creative with a video message
- The power of positivity
- Encourage self reflection
- The gift of gratitude
- Grit bag tags
- Dear Sports

RESOURCES:

- *Applied Sport Psychology*
- *Positive Coaching Alliance*
- *Inside Out Coaching*
- *An open letter to student athletes*
- *Dr. Jim Taylor*

Top 10 tips for diSTAnce learning

- Sunday Night: **Review** Unified Classroom to know what to expect for the week and use your calendar to note when classes are live.
- Check your **email** to start the day, at mid day, and before you log off for the day. Respond within 24 hours.
- Use your **planner** - break work into smaller chunks. Make a list, and check work off when you submit it.
- Get into a **routine** - it will help keep you on pace and productive.
- **Email** teachers if you have questions, or go to live tutoring sessions via Zoom or Hangouts.
- Check **PowerSchool** for feedback on assignments and to see if you are missing any work.
- Take **breaks** to rest your eyes and brain. Be active, eat a snack, and stretch.
- Keep your study space **neat** and **organized**.
- **DO THE WORK!** It's not going to go away. Waiting to climb a hill won't make it any smaller.
- Ask for **help**. Your teachers, counselors, learning specialists, and parents are here for you. We want you to be successful, reach out if you need anything! We're all in this together.

Need Help?

Email any of us if you have questions, need help, additional resources, or referrals to community therapists.

mperry@cadets.com

trichardson@cadets.com

jlarrison@cadets.com

jingalls@cadets.com

Additional videos and resources available under the current families tab at
www.cadets.com

Questions?

Use the **chat** feature to submit your questions and the panel will answer them.

We want to hear from you - What's working well in your home? What's been challenging? Where do you need additional resources?