

# Welcome to JMI's Back to School Night- School Counselor Session



# INTRODUCTION

## Greetings Parents/Guardians

My name is Mr. Ford and I am the School Counselor at JMI. I would like to share a little about me. I have been a counselor for over 30 years and this is my 20th year working in Edison. I started my career as an Addictions Counselor with teens, then as a Prevention Specialist, and eventually as a Mental Health Clinician at the University of Medicine and Dentistry. I have worked at Edison high school, Thomas Jefferson middle school and have been at the elementary level for 10 years now. I offer an array of services to the students of JMI, as well as supportive resources for families.

# INDIVIDUAL COUNSELING

Being a human being is often a struggle and we all need someone to listen and support us at times. I offer 1:1 counseling for students and can address numerous concerns such as: social skills, emotional regulation, stress management, problem solving, conflict resolution and other difficult obstacles students may encounter. In addition, I can help with academic problems such as test anxiety, organization, focusing and developing mindfulness.



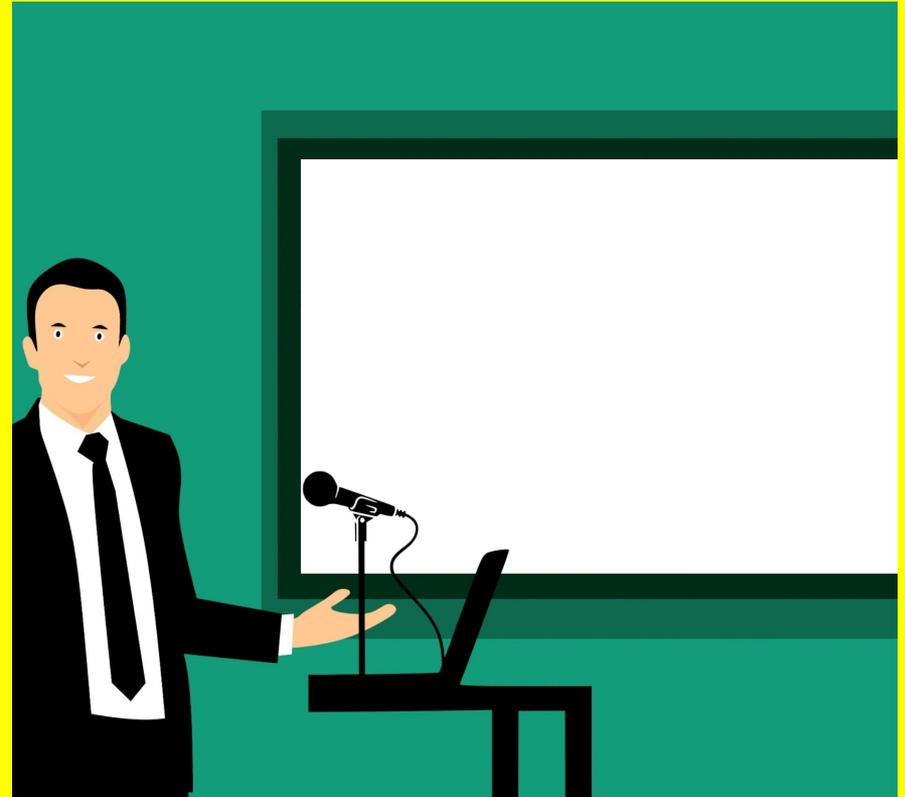
# GROUP COUNSELING



Sometimes individual counseling does not meet the needs of the student and instead they can benefit more from a group counseling environment. Within a group they can learn how to better relate to others, develop social skills, empathy, listening abilities, problem solving and other interpersonal proficiencies that will help them interact in the “real” world. The groups can be general support groups or specific to a topic such as anger management, divorce, social skill building or grief.

# CLASSROOM PRESENTATIONS

In addition to providing counseling services individually or in a group, I also offer classroom presentations on varied topics based upon the needs of the school and our six Character Pillars. I start the year introducing myself to the students and explaining my role in the school. We then move into Conflict Resolution and Bullying presentations where students learn the differences between the two and how to solve the problem. Each month I focus upon a specific grade level to introduce the Character Pillar of the month such as Respect, Digital Citizenship, Caring, Goal Setting and Responsibility, Friendship, Mindfulness, Fairness, and Safety.



# CONFIDENTIALITY

Confidentiality is just a big word for privacy. As a counselor I have an ethical duty to keep what is said to me private whether in an individual or group counseling session. That said, I ALWAYS encourage students to share their concerns with their families. However, there are occasions where I (or any other school employee) cannot keep discussions confidential. They are:

- Self-harm: If a student discloses that they intend to harm themselves in anyway, I have a duty to report it and depending on how severe, follow the proper procedures.
- Harming Others: If a student states they want to hurt someone else, I have to follow the proper procedures to ensure that does not happen.
- Abuse: Whether the abuse is physical abuse, sexual abuse or neglect, I have a duty to contact DCP&P (Department of Child Protection and Permanency).

# BULLYING



We take bullying very seriously at JMI. However, my experience is that both children and many adults don't have a full grasp of the difference between bullying, conflict and age appropriate teasing. The term is often overused and when investigated turns out to be a conflict, a misunderstanding or teasing. Remember, we are working with children who are learning how to interact appropriately with one another. My experience is that when addressed with both student and parent, any negative behavior typically stops. So if your child shares something concerning, please contact either myself, Mrs. Abatemarco or Mr. Mirfield immediately so we can investigate the situation. Please visit my website at the end of the presentation for additional Anti-Bullying information.

# PARENT SUPPORT



As a parent of two boys, I know being a parent can be one of the most challenging roles we hold in life. Although I don't directly counsel parents/guardians, I can help you find the support you need whether it is divorce, grief, homelessness, conflict in the home, financial crisis/ job loss or any other struggles families are trying to cope with in these uncertain times. Please feel free to reach out to me and I will do my best to connect you with the proper resources.

# Lastly....

## Remember

We are in this together.

We are partners in raising happy, healthy, independent, strong children ready for the challenges of the future.

Please visit my website for more information:

[JMI Counseling Corner](#)

