



# Bridgewater Raritan Regional School District

## School Counseling Department

Website: <https://www.brrsd.org/departments/school-counseling>

### April 2021: Monthly SEL Topic

**STRESS DURING THE PANDEMIC:** Spring has sprung! We are all eager to get outside and get back to “normal” but we also realize that the pandemic is still not over just yet. As a school community, we can all work together to help minimize the collective impact. Watch for behavior changes in your children, and remember that not all children and teens respond to stress the same way.

#### Some common changes to watch for:

- Regression: returning to old, outgrown behaviors.
- Unhealthy eating and/or sleeping habits.
- Irritability and acting out behaviors.
- Avoidance of activities that were previously enjoyable.
- Poor school performance or avoidance of school work.
- Difficulty with attention, focus and concentration
- Somatic complaints: unexplained body pain and/or headaches



#### Ways to support your child:

- Talk to your child about the impact of COVID 19 - it's just over a year now and the long-term effects of having all our lives put on hold is something worth exploring in conversation.
- Monitor television, internet, and social media. Watching continual updates on COVID-19 may increase fear and anxiety. Developmentally inappropriate information, or information designed for adults, may cause anxiety or confusion, particularly in young children.
- Provide alternatives. Engage your child in games or other exciting, challenging and fun activities instead.
- Reassure your child that he/she/they are safe. Let them know it is okay to feel stressed or sad about the impact of this pandemic.
- Model healthy stress management strategies; such as taking a brisk walk, jog or other forms of exercise.
- Demonstrate deep breathing. Deep breathing is a valuable tool for calming the nervous system. Do breathing exercises with your children.
- Focus on the positive. Celebrate having more time to spend as a family. Make it as fun as possible. Do family projects. Organize belongings, create masterpieces. Sing, tell silly jokes, and go outside for fresh air, when possible, to connect with nature and get some exercise. Allow older children to connect with their friends virtually.
- Establish and maintain a daily routine. Keeping a regular schedule provides a sense of control, predictability, calm, and well-being.

### Student Resources

**[Penelope the Powerful Parrot](#)** - Join this free interactive, entertaining and full self-care webinar designed for primary school children and their families on April 14th, and May 12th at 6:30 pm

#### **[The Imagine Neighborhood Podcast](#)**

Join the characters of the Imagine Neighborhood to learn about and practice different social emotional learning skills through their stories & adventures. A new episode is available every week!

<https://www.imagineneighborhood.org/podcast-1>

### Parent Resources

We've gathered some resources that you may find helpful as we navigate this new world together. Here are some articles on how to talk to your children about Coronavirus:

[New York Times Article](#)   [NPR Article](#)

#### **Helping Children Cope with Emergencies**

<https://www.cdc.gov/childrenindisasters/helping-children-cope.html>

#### **Coping with Traumatic Events**

<https://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/topics/coping-with-traumatic-events/index.shtml>

#### **How to Talk to Your Anxious Child or Teen About Coronavirus**

<https://adaa.org/learn-from-us/from-the-experts/blog-posts/consumer/how-talk-your-anxious-child-or-teen-about>

You can find the most up-to-date information on BRRSD's District Covid dashboard: <https://www.brrsd.org/covid-19-dashboard>

#### **Pandemic Support Group every Tuesday at 6pm:**

<https://mailchi.mp/sunrise-detox.com/mara-recovery-meeting-via-zoom-tonight-333678?e=67cf9524aa>



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### Primary School News

**Adamsville:** Adamsville's theme for the month of April is *Acceptance!* We will learn and discuss ways to accept, respect, and value differences. Adamsville Eagles will celebrate this month's theme with Autism Acceptance Week from April 12th to April 16th and Diversity Week from April 26<sup>th</sup> to April 30<sup>th</sup>!

**Bradley Gardens:** Over at Bradley Gardens, they are focusing on *integrity!* Students with integrity are honest, truthful, and have a strong moral compass. Integrity means doing the right thing even when no one is watching. Spirit Days will be celebrated!

**Crim:** The main SEL focus at Crim is *trustworthiness!* Students who are trustworthy can be depended upon. Spirit Days will be celebrated! Students continue to develop social emotional skills through the Second Step program with lessons focusing on identifying anger and speaking assertively.

**Milltown:** During the month of April, Milltown students will be practicing *acceptance!* We will be talking and learning about what it means to be *inclusive* of others & how to both accept and celebrate each other's differences!

**Hamilton:** April's Pillar of Character at Hamilton is *Citizenship!* Focusing on the importance of following rules and laws, taking care of the environment, and doing your share to make your school and community a better place. School Spirit Day is the last Wednesday of the month!

**JFK** – At JFK they are focusing on *fairness* in their classroom lessons through the Second Step Program. To reinforce kindness each month, they will continue announcing the kindness act of the day in the morning announcements-- Make sure to listen for these! Spirit Day is April 9<sup>th</sup>- wear JFK gear or colors!

**Van Holten-** Van Holten continuously focuses on Pillar of Character traits each month. The hallways of Van Holten are decorated with spring flowers highlighting the ways each student is unique and how they work to include others. Mrs. Staci Aguanno will be back from maternity leave this month and have new and exciting lessons for all students at Van Holten!

### Intermediate School News

**Eisenhower:** Eisenhower is asking students who want to help brighten our school grounds for Spring to paint rocks with positive messages to be displayed out front near the main entrance. We are all anxiously awaiting Spring and feel like this is one way we can help brighten everyone's day while getting the students involved. Students can make as many rocks as they would like and drop them off in the large box outside the main entrance labeled "rocks."

**Hillside:** Hillside's Character Ed Trait for April is *integrity!* The SEL Lesson of the month focuses on *Test Taking Anxiety.*

The Roots & Shoots program student volunteers are helping organize and prepare for Forest Fest this year! They are working on creating ideas for booths, scheduling, and advertising. Students are also participating in a backyard workday -Dates will be announced shortly!

Spirit Days for this month → April 20<sup>th</sup> and 23<sup>rd</sup>

### Middle School News

The middle school continues to hold spirit days to contribute to a positive school environment.

As 8th graders have started to approach graduation, the school counseling department has been working closely with the graduating students to discuss the transition to high school, career counseling, and high school scheduling.

Counselors are working with the Middle School PTO to have students participate in the "staycation" activities over spring break throughout the entire week! This includes painting at Pinot's Palette and virtual golf at Golf Cave. We will also continue to hold spirit days throughout the rest of the school year for students and staff.

### High School News

#### **Local Scholarship Application - Senior Awards**

The Department of School Counseling coordinates the Senior Local Scholarship and Awards Program at the high school. The required application for these awards/scholarships is available by selecting this google form link: [Local Scholarship Application - Senior Awards](#). This form must be completed in order to be considered for scholarships with the exception of a few departmental awards. Submission of any documents associated with the application, cannot have any personal identifiers on them. **The deadline for this application is Friday, April 9th.**

In addition, some scholarship sponsors have their own application requirements and different deadlines. These additional applications will be available in a google folder. This folder will be updated continually as donors provide us with their documentation. Please check the folder frequently, as we continue to add scholarships to the program. [Supplemental Scholarship Applications](#)

This year's program is scheduled for Monday, June 7th provided we are able to have an in-person ceremony. [Scholarship Senior Letter 2021.pdf](#)