

Never Alone

"You will get there. But right now you are here, and here is wonderful" --Walk the Earth

Hey Cougars! Welcome to a new year full of new possibilities. We hope that you find encouragement and support throughout this January letter. Remember that you are so incredibly loved & wanted!♡♡ Love, Your Mental Health Committee & Mental Health Specialists

In 2020 we learned...

- ★ To appreciate the little things in life
- ★ Racism and injustices are present in our lives
- ★ We must stand up together and for one another
- ★ You are so incredibly strong and can get through anything
- ★ 2020 was a tough year, but you are tougher
 - look at everything that you've made it through :)
- ★ How to slow down and give ourselves grace
- ★ Flexibility and resilience
- ★ We are stronger together than divided
- ★ Our country has a lot of work to be done
- ★ There is always Hope ♡ don't give up ♡ Love ♡ We did it!

As we head into 2021 we have much to look forward to. We are given a fresh year full of numerous possibilities and opportunities. We are given a chance to remember our strength of *making it through 2020!* You can do anything that you set your mind to this year because it is your year to make yourself happy and proud. We are so proud of you for all that you have done and will do. Cheers to a new year that will be filled with hope, joy, and love whether we're together near or far!♡♡♡

Community Art Activity♡

What is one thing you are excited for in the new year?

We are excited to be starting the new year with you! And we'd love to hear from you! Submit a one word response to the above prompt in the google form below and we will use all the responses to create a word cloud collage of all the things we are excited for as a community :)



<https://forms.gle/BLDbdU58JR2fj4nK7>

National suicide prevention crisis line:
1-800-273-TALK (8255)

Crisis Line:
1-866-427-4747, to speak with an adult crisis expert

Crisis Text Line: Text "Home" to 741741

Call Teen Link:
206-461-4922, 6:00-10:00 pm nightly, staffed by teens.

Text Teen Link:
866-833-6546, 6pm-9:30pm



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“Growth is often uncomfortable, messy, and full of feelings you weren’t expecting. But it’s *necessary*.”

Let’s be honest; 2020 was a difficult year:

- School online
 - Loss of connection with people
 - Lack of motivation and hope
- Racism, Injustices, and Inequity
 - Systematic racism brought to light
 - Loss of BIPOC people in our communities
- Pandemic
 - Feelings of isolation/loneliness
 - Loss of family members
- Struggling with Mental Health & Mental Illness
 - Anxiety/anxious feelings, depression/depressed feelings, stress

Entering 2021, here are some things we can actively do to continue to grow and improve the mental health of our community as a community. Let’s commit to making 2021 the best year ever. :)

- Reach out to teachers, counselors, and peers
 - Here to support and encourage you
 - Participate
 - Ask questions and ask for help
 - Plan homework zooms with friends
- Stand up for racial justice, & against racial injustice
 - Educate yourself
 - Take action through petitions
 - Hold others accountable about microaggressions and other unjust actions
 - Participate in peaceful protests, marches, and more to stand up for justice
 - Have the uncomfortable conversations
- Staying Healthy and Being Safe
 - Stay six feet apart from others
 - Remember to wear a mask
 - Connect with friends virtually
 - videocall, text or call an old friend

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How can I help someone struggling with mental health and/or mental illness?

- ★ Listen
 - Be there for them to share as much/as little as they want, validate their feelings, don't ask why they feel this way, be sensitive in using words that have to do with mental health,
- ★ Reach out, take initiative, plan to hang out and talk and laugh. :) Check in with them, ask them what you can do to help/offer to help in practical ways.
- ★ Learn about the illness
 - Signs, symptoms, and treatments that may help, and encourage them to speak to a therapist, doctor, or mental health specialist - you are worth it, and deserve to get better
- ★ Be with them when they are struggling - whether that's a text message saying "I'm here", a phone call, a video call, or physically being with them. Remind them that they are not alone in what they are going through.
- ★ Provide emotional support
 - Remind them that they are not their mental illness, not defined by their mental illness, and that their mental illness is not their fault
 - Remind them that you care about them; want them; and are so happy that they are here. Remind them that they are strong, that you won't give up on them and won't let them give up on themselves, remind them that they can get better, and that this is not the end. That they can and will get through this.♥

Watch these videos here to learn more:) <https://video.link/w/M4BDdb> & here: <https://video.link/w/31CDdb>

Remember that our amazing therapists: Kendra kendra.nyfs@gmail.com and Gina ginaf.nyfs@gmail.com are always here to support you! ♥♥

You're doing better than you think you are. I'm proud of you, keep going, *you've got this!*



**"May today, be one of those days, when you remind yourself that all along, you have been strong"
--Mandy Antoniaci**