

Mindfulness and Teenagers

As counselors, we have the pleasure of watching our students develop from apprehensive freshmen--often unsure of where and how they will fit into our large vibrant high school--into young men and women who, just four years later, can't wait to step out into the larger world beyond Westport. They leave high school eager to grow into the capable and independent adults they so want to be. Over those four years, though, they face the inevitable challenges, disappointments and stressors that high school brings. These come in the form of pressure to excel in academics and sports, fear of failing, the insecurity of navigating the precarious social world of their peers, the nagging worry that they'll never get into a "good" college, and, of course, their own morphing, hormonal adolescent bodies. **The Staples Resilience Project is dedicated to supporting our young people in developing the coping skills they'll need in order to make the most of these tremendous growth years as well as their lives beyond Staples.**

One of the ways in which we work to foster resilience in our students is by sharing ideas in this field with the adults who shape so much of these kids' world: their parents, teachers, and coaches. On a fairly regular basis, **we will pass along information, research, and presentations that we hope you will find intriguing and helpful.** If you would like to learn more about the Staples Resilience Project or are interested in reading our earlier emails, please check out our [website](#).

In this first email of the 2014-2015 school year, we'd like to share a couple of pieces on the positive effects of Mindfulness practice for adolescents. **A great deal of research has been done on the effectiveness of mindfulness practice in reducing stress and improving focus, and the results are overwhelmingly positive and promising.** We believe that these are invaluable skills, which help to counter the effects of today's hyper-distracting world. Please take a few minutes to read [Sarah Rudell Beach's article](#) on teaching mindfulness to teenagers. If you're intrigued and have 20 minutes to spare, we think you will also enjoy Richard Burnett's TEDx talk on [Mindfulness in Schools](#). Mindfulness, he says, entails **"training the muscle of our attention."** It's proven useful in treating anxiety and depression and has been shown effective in reducing stress, which also reduces cortisol levels, resulting in improved immune function.

The Staples Resilience Project is an ongoing endeavor by the Staples Guidance Department aimed to promote the well-being of our students and foster a positive, inclusive school community.

shs.westportps.org/departments/guidance/staples-resilience-project