

COUNSELOR CONNECTION

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CELEBRATING AND REFLECTING



It's been a long year but the finish line is in sight! The theme of this month's newsletter is celebrating and reflecting on how far we have come in the 2020-2021 school year. There is no doubt it's been an unusual year, with a great deal of change and unexpected challenges. If we think about it, our students have grown in ways never we could have predicted. As a counseling team, we feel it's really important to focus on their growth and reflect on how much we've all learned about life over this past year.

In this newsletter, you will find some suggestions for how to finish the year with positivity and purpose. We share some insights from an article that suggests we consider, as a lesson from the pandemic, that we consider reframing what matters the most. We offer another DBT SKILLS-A tip for how to stay present. Since the end is rapidly approaching, we have some important information about end of the year events and school materials collection. Last but not least, we've included some conversation starters for you to bring to your families, to highlight the shining moments from this past year, with the goal of bringing to the forefront some of the positive gains that occurred in the midst of these "unprecedented times." It's been a bumpy ride, but the end of the school year is near.

We appreciate your patience and partnership as we've ticked off the months of this year. We hope everyone has a strong finish to the year, and that you will let us know if there is anything we can do to support you or your students in these final weeks. Hang in there everyone!

NEW YORK TIMES ARTICLE

We found an interesting article in the New York Times called "[Teen Anguish in the Pandemic](#)," written by Emily Esfahani Smith, the author of [The Power of Meaning: Finding Fulfillment in a World Obsessed With Happiness](#). Unfortunately, the article is only available to those with a subscription, but we feel it is a worthwhile read. The most impactful takeaway, from our perspective, is this quote: "{Parents} can encourage {students} to prioritize their health and well being by getting enough sleep and making time for play and leisure. And above all, they can teach their children that loss is an inevitable part of life by speaking to them about the grief of the past year. This doesn't mean parents should necessarily lower their standards. But they might emphasize different bench-marks for achievement, like those they say they value most for their children - happiness, health and love".

TIPS TO END THE YEAR WITH POSITIVITY & PURPOSE

- ◆ Set reasonable and reachable goals.
- ◆ Stick to a routine.
- ◆ Lead by example.
- ◆ Allow your student to take some time to just be a kid!
- ◆ Send a positive note to someone you appreciate as a gesture of gratitude.
- ◆ Stay positive and remind your student to "work hard and play hard." Summer is coming.
- ◆ Remind your student to focus on one thing at a time.
- ◆ Take a moment to pause and reflect on the positives from this past year.
- ◆ Do a gear check to make sure your student has what they need to finish out the year.



DBT SKILL OF THE MONTH: MINDFUL MINUTE

A good DBT/Steps-A Skill to help kids through the end of the year could be a reminder of taking a mindful minute.

A mindful minute is where we slow down and pay attention to what we are experiencing in the present moment. A great way to have a mindful minute is to **first**, set a one minute timer on a device like a phone or computer. **Second**, get in your mindfulness position by sitting in your chair with a straight back and with your feet flat on the floor. Your eyes can gaze down towards the ground at nothing in particular, or you can also close your eyes. **Third**, fill your entire belly with air in a deep breath, then slowly release your breath through your nose.

A mindful minute can be helpful:

- Before a test or quiz
- When you're feeling frustrated with a friend, sibling, parent or teacher
- First thing in the morning
- Before bedtime
- During class if you're feeling overwhelmed



UPCOMING EVENTS & DATES

June 3-4th:	WEB event during WIN time for 6th graders
June 14-18th:	Materials Collection (Textbooks, kits, etc.)
June 16th:	8 th grade Promotion Ceremony at MIHS Stadium @ 6:00 pm
June 17th/18th:	Yearbook distribution during WIN time
June 21st:	LAST DAY OF SCHOOL (fully remote from 8:30-11:30) & Cohort C iPad, textbook and other resource materials collection (12-4pm)

"WE ALL HAVE MENTAL HEALTH"

The Sources of Strength Peer Leaders (PL) led a Wednesday seminar this month all about mental health. 7th grade Science teachers required attendance and over 250 students attended the live event. It was recorded and is available on the IMS website for anyone who would like to view it. Participants learned about the importance of mental health, and how to get support for themselves or a friend. All participants were all given the opportunity to complete an exit ticket, which gave them the chance to discreetly ask for a check in with a counselor if they needed/wanted to talk to someone. The PL did a great job getting this very important information across. If you have a 7th grader, be sure to ask them what they learned. If you missed this seminar and would like to watch, here is a link to the ["We All Have Mental Health"](#) seminar.

CONVERSATION STARTERS



- ◆ What are the three most important lessons you've learned during this pandemic?
- ◆ What would you say is your shining moment from this past school year?
- ◆ In what ways have you grown over the course of this past year?
- ◆ What positive changes has your family made since the pandemic began?