

MENTAL HEALTH NEWSLETTER

This monthly newsletter will include information on mental health topics, parent-teen communication, and conversation starters. I hope this newsletter can prompt some valuable family conversations each month. Please reach out with questions or concerns at any time.

--Nicole Ooms, Licensed School Social Worker, (219) 956-3143 (ext. 2038)



GRIEF

Grief doesn't follow any hard rules and is different for everyone. Grief, in all its forms, is normal. You do not need therapy for grief unless you find that your inability to complete the tasks of mourning is negatively impacting your day-to-day life.

Tasks of Mourning

1. Accept the reality of the loss.
2. Process the pain.
3. Adjust to the world without the deceased.
4. Find a way to remember the deceased, while moving forward in life.

There is no well-defined timeline for grief. How and when you feel grief can be determined by how well you knew the deceased, your past experiences with death, and your own support system.

FEAR

Debriefing after an experience where you and your child are fearful for their safety is important. In reflecting on such an experience, it is valuable to review the facts as opposed to rumors. An official press release is the best source for facts, because it contains all the information that may not have been available at the time of the event. Discuss the thoughts, feelings, and actions that you each experienced during the event. Finally, discuss how to feel safe in returning to a regular day-to-day routine. It can be helpful to emphasize to your student that the school and local law enforcement make decisions based on how to best protect students.

CONVERSATION STARTERS

Family Culture

- Do you think our family rules are fair?
- What is the best thing about our family?

Values

- Do you think it is ever okay to lie? If so, when and why?
- How would you change the world if you could?

Teen Friendship

- Do you ever feel lonely or left out?
- What does it mean to be popular at KVHS?

PARENT-TEEN COMMUNICATION

How to really listen to your teen

1. Give your teen your full attention - no screens and no multi-tasking. Schedule time to listen each week if you need to.
2. Don't interrupt them with your opinions.
3. Control your reactions, getting angry or too excited can shut down the conversation.
4. Reflect with them on their thoughts, feelings, and actions.
5. Don't follow-up with a lecture.